



# SOLDIERS OF THE TSAR AND OTHER SKETCHES AND STUDIES OF THE RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

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JULIUS WEST





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# Soldiers of the Tsar and other sketches and studies of the Russia of to-day

Julius West

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SOLDIERS OF THE 18th  
AND OTHER REGIMENTS  
OF THE ARMY  
OF THE WEST

# SOLDIERS OF THE TSAR,

AND OTHER SKETCHES AND STUDIES

:: :: OF THE RUSSIA OF TO-DAY. :: ::

By JULIUS WEST.





MOULDER & CO. (LONDON)







NICOLAI NICOLAEVITCH

# LDIERS OF THE TSAR

AND OTHER SKETCHES AND STUDIES  
:: OF THE RUSSIA OF TO-DAY. ::

BY

JULIUS WEST

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEAN CLAIREAU



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TO HAROLD W. WILLIAMS.



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## PREFACE.

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### ON WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE RUSSIANS.

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THIS little book of sketches and studies is the work of a journalist who was in Russia for some months during the early part of the war. He spent most of his time talking to people, and in Russia one need never fear that casual travelling companions will take no interest in one. He had long chats with Russians of all classes, officers of many ranks, soldiers (whose taciturnity was particularly difficult to break through), Jews, Poles, and queer odds-and-ends who find themselves places within the great Empire. He tried to get them to talk about themselves, which was sometimes difficult, and about one another, which was often dangerously easy. The result is a book based entirely upon personal observation and on gossip, and not as most of the volumes published nowadays are, upon other books. The author is aware that this method of collecting evidence has the defects of its qualities, but he is equally certain that of the many ways of getting at the

truth, the statistician's method of "random sampling" is to be preferred to the usual journalistic process of interviewing celebrities and nobody else. The publicist has too often a reputation for omniscience and epigram to be maintained at all costs to be a thoroughly reliable source of information. The supposed leader of public opinion too frequently exists without a following. The author, having derived his views from the common Russian-in-the-street is unable to give his opinions, acquired from nameless sources, that air of pontifical finality which should mark a classic work. But, on the other hand, he believes in the correctness of his own impressions, which have been checked by repeated conversations and queries.

The object of this little book is to make its readers feel that they have been among Russians, among normal, average Russians, in the crowded period of the present war. The three chief towns, Petrograd, Moscow, and Warsaw, are therefore described in separate chapters, not as the guide-books describe them, but as they feel to a stranger. The people in them and in the Army are the subjects of a few sketches, in which an attempt is made to introduce the reader to the types, to share with him the sensation of those orderly intangibilities which in their sum make up a human character. A few of the problems which

at present confront Russians are also diffidently described. A couple of articles have been added: *Songs from Siberia* and "*Translated from the Russian,*" the interest of which, it is hoped, will not be considered merely literary. The writer believes that the character of the Russian is exceptionally accessible, as characters go, and he wishes to describe what he imagines must be the keys to it.

It will be noticed that pure politics has been avoided. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, the writer's head is still awlirl with the complexity of the situation in Russia. In the second place, a discussion of politics will not make the reader feel that he has been among Russians, who hate politics. The attitude of the average Russian towards his Government is much like our own. It is all a conundrum on a large scale, and nobody has the answer to it. A certain aged diplomatist, astonished at a recent event, which was greatly in favour of Russia, dropped this remark, "I suppose it's all due to some saint or other, devil take it all!" He had never spoken for his fellow-countrymen in a more truly representative manner.

But the people the author meets insist invariably on asking questions dealing with Russian politics. He has therefore ventured to insert

three short "notes"—on Nationalities, Bureaucracy, and Loving Russia—in which he has attempted to sum up a few difficulties. The author has been collecting a quantity of material on those two interconnected problems—the Polish and the Jewish—and hopes in course of time to publish a separate study of the matter.

J. W.



IN TIME OF WAR.



## CHAPTER I.

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### SOLDIERS OF THE TSAR.

THE pick of the officers and men are at the front, but only the pick. The streets seem to have a perfectly normal proportion of men of fighting age, and on all sides one sees evidence of Russia's enormous reserve of men. Pivato's Restaurant, where the officers of the Imperial Guard meet at lunch, is by no means deserted by its military *clientèle*, although those who come now are often aged and retired generals, who look as if they must surely have seen service during the Crimean War. Even as things are at present, enough officers remain to give the restaurants a peculiarly un-English sound; it is made by the light silvery rattling of their spurs as they walk along the corridors and through the rooms. I am told that a huge number of the men who were mobilized at the beginning of August were sent home almost at once, because the number available was found to be enormously in excess of probable requirements for a long time ahead. Russia, if hard pressed, can raise an army of no less than fifteen millions; but she finds that about

a quarter of this is all she can handle at once, although the exact number cannot be obtained. But it is certainly the best quarter. The soldiers at present in Petrograd often wear so many medals that one is at first inclined to regard some of them as the heroes of a hundred fights. Medals, however, have different meanings in Russia and in England. In Russia they are given away wholesale on all manner of anniversary occasions, and seldom amount to much. The soldiers are nearly all dressed in one of the numerous equivalents of khaki in use, and wear boots that come up to the knees as a compliment to the severity of their winters. The long overcoats that come down to within four inches of the ground are evidence to the same effect. The officers, one finds, are extraordinarily reticent, even among their closest friends. In fact, they have no choice. An officer will receive instructions to prepare to leave Petrograd by a certain day and hour, but not until within an hour of his departure is he informed even of the name of the station from which he is to leave the town, and he does not know his destination until he is actually *en route*. It may be the Prussian frontier, or the Austrian, or the Caucasian, or he may be one of those unfortunate officers sent into Siberia to take the place of a luckier man—that makes no difference. Incidentally, while on the subject of soldiers, it



may be remarked that here are no appeals corresponding to Lord Kitchener's. Russia has all the men she wants, and to spare.

In the Army there are said to be no less than 400,000 Jews serving at present. No Jew may become an officer, strictly speaking, although a few have nevertheless recently received sub-lieutenancies. The average Russian soldier gets on very well with his Jewish brother-in-arms. The moujik has better muscles, the Jew better brains; therefore Gentile and Jew are able to do a great many little things to alleviate one another's hardships. There are innumerable stories current just now as to the behaviour of the Jewish soldier, who comes, of course, of a thoroughly non-militant race. Thus: two Jewish soldiers, suffering from leg wounds, occupied adjacent beds in a hospital. A massagist came and attended to one of them, who howled under her ministrations. She then came and massaged the other, who behaved stoically. Quoth the first: "Why, didn't she hurt at all?" "No," was the reply, "you see, I gave her the leg which wasn't damaged. It hurt less, and I shan't have to go back so soon." Then there is the story of the Jew who, when the firing began, picked up the nearest officer and bolted. The officer, as soon as he could speak, asked: "What are you doing to me?" The Jew replied, "I'm saving

your life." " But I'm all right." " No you're not, you're wounded." " I'm not, I tell you, put me down at once." " You're wounded, I tell you, only you don't notice it " By this time the fighting line was far behind, and the Jew had handed the perfectly uninjured officer over to the nearest ambulance depôt, and was explaining to the puzzled doctors that if it hadn't been for a trifling error on his part, he would have received the Cross of St George for saving the officer's life. Lastly, there is a yarn on a frankly commercial basis. A colonel offered a Cross of St George and 200 roubles to every soldier in his regiment who captured an ensign belonging to the enemy. A day or two later a Jew came along with one of these trophies, and was duly rewarded. A couple of days later still, he appeared with another, and received another Cross and the cash reward, and was told he was a hero, etc. Two days afterwards he turned up with yet another ensign. This time the colonel was inquisitive, and wanted to know how it was done. " Well, sir, you see, I've made an arrangement with a German sergeant. We swop flags; I get my Cross and the 200 roubles; and he gets promoted. Only as his colonel doesn't give him any money, I allow him a commission on my takings." Perhaps I should add that all these stories were told me by Russian Jews, who are on the whole

very fond of telling tales against themselves, as they have a keen sense of humour.

Ever since the war began the railways have been worked up to the very hilt—a metaphor surely permissible in these times when rapidity of transit is itself a weapon. Travelling from Moscow eastwards, one passes or is passed by a troop or hospital train at least four times every hour. This goes on day and night; always the same long trains, composed of large shed-like waggons, in which soldiers coming from the wilds of Siberia have often enough been compelled to make their homes for a whole month on end. In these overcrowded and peripatetic one-room tenements the moujik soldier lives—barring the absence of womenfolk—in much the same way as in his cottage. He excludes most of the available light and even more of the available air. He performs his ablutions from a bucket perched unsteadily on the footboards, and then washes such few articles of underclothing as may be spared at one time. Every Russian station platform has an oven, always in operation, where boiling water is to be had—to-day there are additional numbers of these for the use of the soldiers. At every station one sees a long queue of men armed with buckets and kettles waiting their turns. The supplies of hot water become the unlimited mugfuls of tea which the Russian soldier is for ever emptying when



*en route* for the front. Tea and songs are his only diversions. An outsider must speak of the fighting songs of another nation with considerable diffidence; an illustration of the pitfalls which lie in his path is supplied by the French journalist who spoke of a "grave and solemn chant" which turned out to be "Tipperary." The Russian soldiers' songs have also a grave and solemn sound, but the words are generally descriptive. They mostly begin on the natural beauty of some village, and end by complaints of the behaviour of its unnatural beauties. These songs are all but untranslatable on account of the extraordinary number of diminutive terms they contain. In Russian it is possible to add a diminutive suffix even to a preposition.

To the world at large the Russian peasant presents, whether inside a uniform or not, an exterior so reserved and so apparently apathetic that one is at first inclined to marvel at the various authors who write about the soul of the Russian people. The soldier is seldom enthusiastic, but he is even more seldom querulous. Only once did I hear a *bonâ fide* grumbler. He had been engaged in digging trenches outside Warsaw, and was tired. "I've been in two lots of army manœuvres," he said in a tone of absolute disgust, "but I've never had to work like this before." He was obviously possessed by the idea

that his commanders were not playing the game. The Russian soldier is very different from the English volunteer. He does not shave daily like the latter (on the contrary, it seems that half the army has decided to let its beards grow until it can return home). He does not lark about. He is quiet and very stubborn. He is, in fact, a great deal nearer the bull-dog than the English soldier. He would be frankly upset by that giddy English soldiers' song which winds up :

Send out my mother and my sister and my brother,  
But for goodness' sake don't send me.

He is a yokel, pure and simple. When convalescent he walks about the streets of the large cities in little groups, convoyed by a Sister of Mercy, clumsily and with astonished eyes. He does not like the cities ; to him they are not show-places, but something unpleasant which he does not understand, or wish to understand. As a fighting man, he does not take readily to artillery ; the only sort of combat he understands is the hand-to-hand variety. So the authorities supply him with a long four-edged bayonet, which, when mounted, gives him a weapon measuring five feet six inches long. Against this the German infantryman has only a short blade of the paper-knife shape, and is therefore fairly ineffective. Moreover, the Russian soldier's thrust includes a slight twist, which leaves a wound hard to heal. This will

explain why the German offensive has almost always relied upon artillery far more than upon anything else. This sketch of the Russian soldier may conclude with the statement that he eats unlimited quantities of black (rye) bread, and that he is nearly a vegetarian, and that the combination of black bread and weak tea gives him a characteristic odour rather like that of a horse.

The most popular soldiers in Russia to-day are the Cossacks. These are horsemen from the south-eastern provinces of Russia, whose families hold land rent free from the Emperor, in return only for military service. The arrangement is the old feudal system over again. Ever since the Middle Ages bands of outlaws used to make certain islands on the Don and the Volga their headquarters, whence, little by little, they built up something almost in the nature of a republic. But there were to be no women in this republic. Every Cossack who entered into relations with any woman did so at the risk of his life. Nevertheless, their numbers grew. The series of raids and battles which constituted their life attracted many; to criminals it promised protection, to the adventurous it offered everything. For these reasons the importance of the Cossacks became greater and greater, until, in 1772, one of their leaders, Pugachev, was able to hold up almost half Russia for a couple of years. Although many



Tsars strove to suppress these outlaws, it was only within comparatively recent years that they succeeded.

But the Cossack soldier remains a nomad and a freebooter at heart. Many stories which do not appear in print are told in journalistic circles in Petrograd of his methods of conducting warfare, and his little ways in general. In Poland the officers of the Austrian invaders were clad in fur-lined tunics of great warmth and comfort. Forthwith a trade came into existence in some parts where Cossacks were. Two and a half roubles (five shillings) was made the regular price of such tunics, which, one is assured, were almost invariably delivered on the day following the order. Subsequently a trade in horses sprung up. For five roubles a Cossack found you a horse, provided no questions were asked, and for a few weeks a roaring business was conducted on these terms. Then it was found that some of these cheap animals were not of Austrian, but of Russian origin, and there was trouble.

After the war had lasted a couple of months or so, and Crosses of St. George were beginning to be distributed, Cossacks began to organise their collection on a scientific basis. The Cross of St. George corresponds to our Victoria Cross, although the qualifications for it are perhaps rather less exacting. It also entitles its owner to a small



pension, and a heroic individual may go on adding to the number of his Crosses. Cossacks began to form little bands, and would toss for the privilege of capturing an officer—one of the recognised qualifications for the decoration. The successful individual would then be helped by his friends, who would do all they could to “round up” Austrian and German detachments, and leaving it to him to do the actual capturing—if it came to this. On a few such occasions the lasso came in useful, as the Cossack often catches horses by this method. The Cossack is not afraid of fighting a band three times as numerous as his own.

About the most popular man in Russia at the moment is a Cossack named Cosma Krutchkov. On August 11th, 1914, he was on outpost duty at some point near the frontier with four comrades, when some peasants came and announced the presence of Germans in the neighbourhood. It was then 11 p.m., and the Cossack dislikes night work, so nothing happened. Early the next morning, a detachment of twenty-seven German cavalymen was seen in the distance. The Cossacks immediately rode to the attack. After a few shots had been exchanged, the Germans, seeing how few their opponents were, turned round and rode to meet them. After a few minutes' fighting, twenty two Germans were dead (eleven by Krutchkov's

hand), two lay wounded on the ground, and the remaining three had fled. Krutchkov had been wounded sixteen, and his horse eleven times. The other Cossacks had each received a few wounds. All four were taken to a hospital at Vitebsk, where they recovered in a wonderfully short space of time; now they are again at the front. Krutchkov received his Cross and his fame filled all Russia. His vividly illustrated exploit is to be seen in every other shop window in working-class neighbourhoods. Pamphlets and songs about him are on sale everywhere. He is the hero of an operetta, the subject of a thousand articles, and the ideal of every Russian nursery. In any but a newspaper age he would become a national myth, possibly with his comrades, the objects of the adoration of some local twin-cult for the origins of which students of such matters would seek in vain. As things are, Krutchkov's father has been thanked and rewarded by his ataman for the "excellent education given to his son," and even the spirit of romance must be satisfied.

So much for the men. It is less easy to generalize about the officers. These come from nearly every station of Russian society, and are of all sorts. On the whole it may fairly be said that the Russian exhibits far less phlegm than the British officer. I met a good many of them immediately after one of the river fights in the

San-Vistula region They were so upset, especially those whose baptism of fire had just occurred, that they could give us no coherent idea of what had been happening. A good many could only talk about the effect of the sight of bloodshed upon themselves, and described in great detail their feelings in the presence of entrails smoking in the air, of the contorted faces on heads rolling from their bodies, the casual limbs flying in the air, and the blood in all circumstances. These impressions were given me one night at about 10 p.m. at a railway station. About midnight my train came in, and I went to sleep, awaking at about 7 o'clock in the morning. In the same compartment a group of my officers were sitting, still talking about the bloodshed. It was obvious that they had not slept all night. I have heard several stories which all testify to a certain "jumpiness" in the nerves of the officers, who are far less apathetic than the men. One officer, for example, in one of the fights in the woods by the Vistula, had run a man through with his sword. His opponent had been backing, and at the fatal moment was up against a tree. The sword went right through the man and stuck in the tree. With an effort the officer wrenched his weapon free; as he did so, the corpse fell forward and covered him with blood. The officer fainted, and came to in the hands of the stretcher bearers

who had picked him up, supposing from the blood on his uniform that he had been severely wounded. Another officer was so upset by a shell which burst near him that he temporarily lost all self-control, tore off all his clothes, and fled, shouting wildly and incoherently. There are a great many stories of this sort to be picked up, especially from the Red Cross doctors, but we must believe that this extreme nerviness is, after all, exceptional. It may be added that the Russian officer is invariably courteous and on the best possible terms with his men, who look upon him as something *in loco parentis*.

The Emperor himself, in inspecting a number of his pages who had been granted commissions, told them that they were to consider themselves the fathers of the men in their command. And it is probably quite fair to assert that both officers and men act up to this assumption of fatherhood.



## CHAPTER II.

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### NICOLAI NICOLAEVITCH.

THE Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaevitch, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, is one of those men who are either loved or hated, but never ignored. People used to think of him as a narrow-minded and somewhat eccentric specialist—that is to say, all except the few who really knew him. Nowadays, Russia has learnt to know better.

The Grand Duke is a cousin of the Emperor, once removed. He was born in 1856, the son of another Grand Duke of the same name, and the grandson of the Emperor Nicolas I. He filled several moderately important military posts in the usual grand-ducal way, and has a longish string of honorary colonelcies to his name. Incidentally, he is the Colonel-in-Chief of the 10th regiment of Prussian Hussars, but that is by the way. He spent a good many years travelling about on the Asiatic frontiers of Russia, and is apparently largely responsible for the organisation of the regiments of Kirghiz Cossacks. In more recent years he has been the Commander of the first of

the eight military districts into which European Russia is divided. This district has its centre at Petrograd, and takes in the whole of Finland. The post held by Nicolai Nicolaevitch was, therefore, one of great responsibility, but it was also one of opportunity. In 1909, one of Russia's ablest soldiers, Adjutant-General Sukhomlinov, became her War Minister, and immediately set to work to reorganize the Army on modern lines, and to apply the lessons learnt in the Japanese War. In the Grand Duke, Sukhomlinov had an able, and what matters more in Russia, an influential supporter. Between them they pushed things forward far more rapidly even than most of their subordinates suspected. They abolished the excessively centralized system which had prevailed up to their time, and in its place adopted something more like the British plan of unit responsibility. The results are now public property.

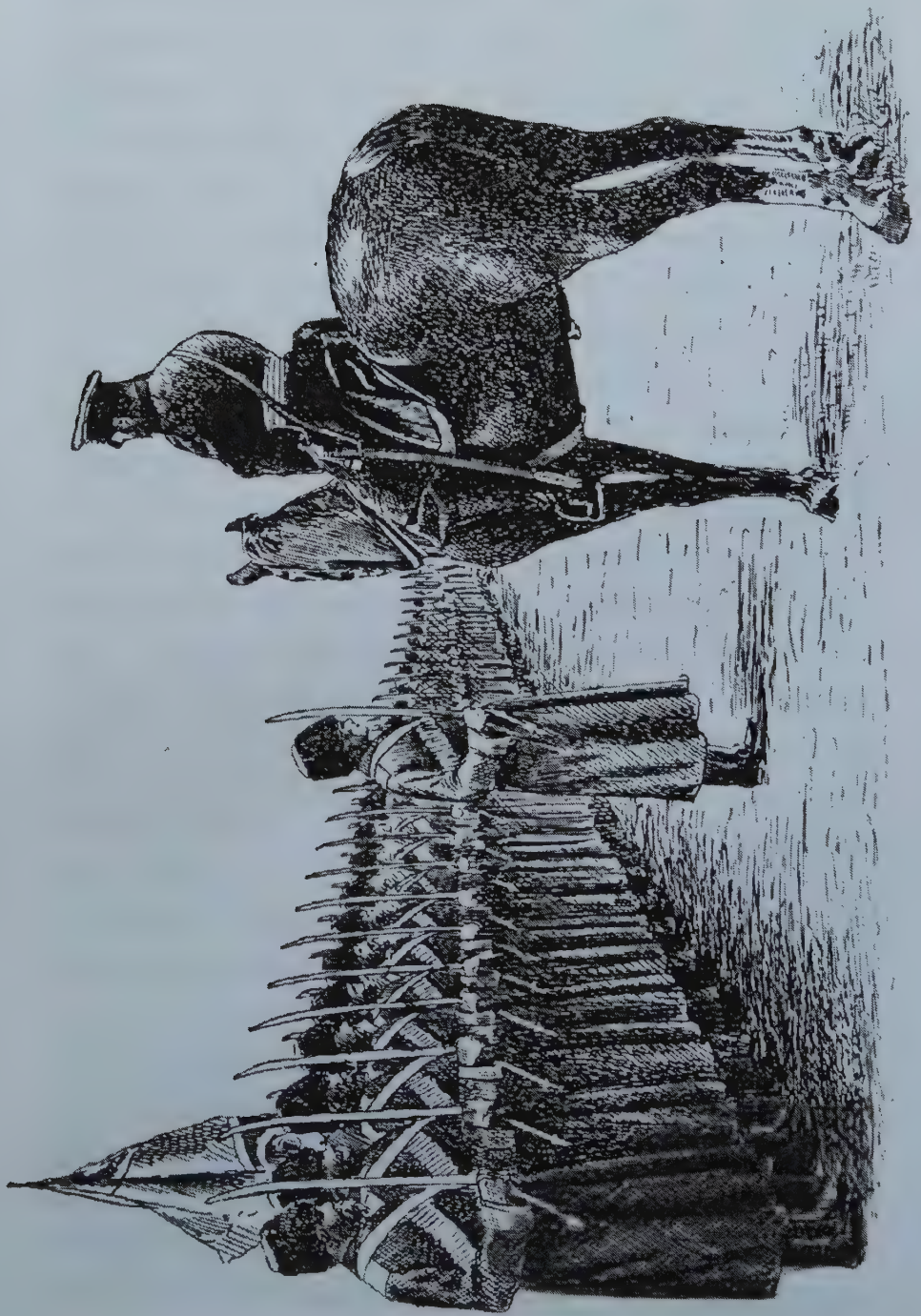
Nicolai Nicolaevitch had never been really popular before the outbreak of the War. In the first place, he had put himself at the head of the anti-German party at the Russian Court. The present Empress used to make much of her German affinities, and up to the very eve of the War did her best to make German the Court language, and German customs the Imperial usage. The Grand Duke, on the other hand, was

a thorough-going Slav, and brother-in-law to the King of a thoroughly Slav little country, for both he and his brother had married sisters of Nicolas of Montenegro. It seemed only natural, therefore, that when war broke out Nicolai Nicolaevitch should be put in charge of operations against Germany and Austria. Indeed, if there is any truth in the pleasant stories which are just now being circulated in Petrograd, it was the Grand Duke who, with his usual emphasis, brought round the peace-loving Emperor to realise the dangers of the German aggression.

The War broke out, and before many weeks had passed people were marvelling at the unexpected smoothness with which the organisation was working. It was the Grand Duke who insisted on the temporary suppression of vodka, in order to enable mobilisation to be carried out in the speediest possible manner. The results, as we now know, were so unexpectedly successful that we can now say that the Grand Duke indirectly placed all the social reformers in the world in his debt.

Right through the campaign all the stories which people have been telling about the Grand Duke have such a strong family likeness, that through them, even if they are not literally true, we learn to know the sort of man he is. Nicolai Nicolaevitch is one of those men who will have









things done just according to his orders, and not otherwise. If he is disobeyed—and disobedience was until recently not regarded as altogether discreditable on the part of a Russian officer—there is trouble. A list of the generals whose faces he is reported to have smacked would make piquant reading. Not so very long ago, when the Germans were attacking Warsaw, there was a good deal of drunkenness among the officers staying at a certain hotel. Suddenly the Grand Duke arrived, and something like an earthquake happened. A few officers were summarily degraded, and some were sent straight out to the firing line. The next day that hotel was a very empty place, inhabited only by a few wounded and convalescent officers, while in all Warsaw the sale of all drinks stronger than black kvass stopped completely—and this drink is not quite as intoxicating as ginger beer.

Nicolai Nicolaevitch is not a man who talks, for which reason he has already succeeded in building up a sort of Napoleonic tradition around himself, which fits in nicely with the little legends of his brusqueness and taciturnity. There is a pleasant yarn told about him in connection with the Emperor's visit to Ivangorod. After the inspection of troops, the Grand Duke was standing next to the Emperor, a few yards away from a group of generals. He ordered General Rusky,

then in command of the forces in that region, to step forward. Nicolai Nicolaevitch next ordered a private soldier to come forward and hack off the General's epaulettes. We can imagine the dismay of the other generals as the soldier obeyed. "Now cut mine off," was the next order. The soldier did so. "Now put them on his shoulders." It was the Grand Duke's playful little way of promoting Rusky to the rank of Adjutant-General—the highest in the Russian Army.

The officers and men of the Army have the greatest admiration for their Commander-in-Chief. He has shown himself thoroughly considerate in his treatment of troops, which goes a very long way to making a good reputation. Thus, for example, when some of the Guards regiments had suffered very severely during Rennenkampf's invasion of Eastern Russia, the Grand Duke ordered his Generals to see that as far as possible regiments which had been exposed to severe fire should be sent back to rest. In the case of these particular Guards regiments, it may be added, the period of rest was nearly three months.

I only once saw the Commander-in-Chief. November 17th is a minor festival in the Russian Church, on which day the miraculous preservation of the life of Alexander II. from a great danger is commemorated. In the greatest Cathedral of Petrograd a special service was held.

The great square space under the dome was railed off. Inside it stood a group of officers. Through the great doors of the sanctuary the voices of a magnificent choir flooded the vast building. On the steps leading up to the sanctuary stood a crowd of priests robed in gold vestments, among them the highest dignitaries of the Church. But the congregation attended less to the singing and to the clergy than to a very tall man in the uniform of an Adjutant-General, who hovered around the group of officers, and who behaved as if entirely unconscious of the ceremony. He fidgeted continually, now pacing away into the middle of the railed off area, now turning round to glare at the congregation, now leaning upon his sword abstractedly, now using it to trace out an imaginary plan of campaign upon the floor. This was Nicolai Nicolaevitch, who reminded one at this moment, more than of anything else, of an old charger snorting and pawing the ground in joyous anticipation of the battle to come.



## CHAPTER III.

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### THEIR LAST STAND:

#### THE STORY OF A GREAT RETREAT.

To the casual observer, the strongest point about the Russian Army does not seem to be its discipline. Officers and men behave towards one another with a kindly affection which is not typical of other European armies. In addressing his orderly, a Russian officer will almost invariably call him "golubchik," which means "little pigeon"; could a British colonel, one wonders, possibly call a man "duckie darling" without fearing to undermine all discipline! The men on the march walk in groups, keeping no particular step, and if they should happen to meet likely-looking passers-by, they will stop them and ask for cigarettes. The impression one gets is of extraordinary laxness. But when the same men are in action, one learns that they possess a very real discipline, as strong in its grip upon them as that of any army in the world.

Last October the Germans made their great effort to take Warsaw, and actually succeeded in

approaching within four or five miles of the city at one point, before they were thrust back. How was it that they were able to get so near? The answer lies, I fear, in the treachery of a General K——, who had German affinities, and who was responsible for some of the first stages of the defence of the city. We know that a great battle took place between Blonie and Warsaw, and that two Siberian regiments, amongst others, were cut to pieces. Two days later I heard that the only surviving officer of these regiments was to be found at a little hospital, run by some friends of mine, and I immediately went to see him.

He was a young lieutenant, was this Siberian, badly wounded in the shoulder, with the unsmiling face of one who had just survived a great disaster. Like his men, he was short and sturdy, and with the yellowish complexion of his race. He told me the story of the tragedy which had befallen his regiment, giving the details in the manner of one delivering a report at headquarters. He was terribly affected by what had happened, but the gleam of pride—pride in his men and the fight they made—was as unmistakable as the day.

The two regiments, numbering 4,000 men each, had been posted to guard a flank position, on the extreme right of the Russian line. They had been misinformed as to the direction of the

enemy. They heard only the distant thunder of artillery—which is always difficult to locate by the mere noise it makes—and they saw only one or two Taubes, flying at a great height, and apparently harmless.

Suddenly shells began to fall. The Germans had found their range in an instant. Those harmless-looking Taubes, of course, had done it. A change of position was ordered. But before the Siberian regiments had started, shells began to drop upon them from another direction. The whole body of Russians realized what had happened. They had been outflanked; the Germans had almost enveloped them. There was only one thing to be done. The Siberians attempted to join up with the nearest Russians on their left. They marched a mile or so in the gathering darkness under a devastating storm of shells, only to find that the others had already been moved away. The Siberians were isolated. Worse than that, they were approaching a large body of Germans, whose numbers, at the time, it was impossible to tell. And, to crown all, K—— selected this particular moment to meet the Germans, taking with him several hundred soldiers, and to “surrender” them.

A colonel remained in command of the two regiments, upon which machine-guns had now opened fire with decimating effect. He under-

stood that retreat on his part would enable the Germans to come up to the very walls of Warsaw, while attack might at least give reinforcements time to arrive. He ordered a charge.

In the darkness the dauntless little Siberians sprang forward. Their long bayonets, they knew, would soon find the vulnerable spots of the enemy, for the German had long since learned to fear the Russian charges. A bayonet charge in the dark is perhaps the severest test of discipline, but the Siberians did not falter for an instant. As they tore along, many fell under the merciless fire of the machine-guns, firing haphazardly in the dark, but nevertheless making occasional hits. At last the two lines met. For perhaps half-an-hour all was thrust-and-parry and hand-to-hand. The Russians fought with bayonets, with rifle-butts, with their bandoliers, and with their naked fists, not knowing all the time whether they were attacking a mere outpost or an army corps.

At last the Germans began to move slowly and painfully. Perhaps the ferocity of the onslaught had led them to over-estimate the number of the Siberians. In any case they had had enough. The Russians sounded the recall, and little by little their men reassembled. But death had taken a heavy toll. Only a few hundred remained unhurt. Large numbers lay wounded, it would not be possible to bring them in before daylight.



The colonel who ordered the charge had himself been killed in it. Little groups of Russians sprang up from here and there, vaguely feeling their direction, not knowing how many of their comrades they had left behind. The machine-gun fire of the Germans had ceased. The Siberians had smashed up two guns at least.

A road was found and a retreat towards Warsaw began. The men had only been on the road half an hour when shells once more began to drop. Most of them, of course, were wasted in the darkness, but a few were better guided, and converted whole groups of men into terrible and shapeless masses. After a while the German artillery ceased fire. Once again the machine-guns began their deadly work. The Germans were pursuing them.

Then followed what I think was the finest piece of that night's work. The Russians, their numbers still diminishing, were ordered to "right about face." Not a man disobeyed. For twenty minutes they lay in wait, now a mere fragment of their original strength. The sound of approaching cavalry was heard, the Germans were coming at last. They were allowed to approach within a few yards. Then the Russians opened fire, and charged once more. The Germans were completely surprised. But, after they had fled, only just over a hundred Siberians remained able to

walk. Mercifully they struck a railway before long and were picked up by a hospital train about 3 a.m.

That is the story I tell people when they ask whether the Russian Army has that *esprit de corps* which alone makes victory possible. The clear courage of those Siberian soldiers in the moment of disaster is typical of the great army of the East.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### UN MOUJIK S'EN VA T'EN GUERRE.

FOMA IVANOV had been in the Reserves for about ten years, so that he was not called up until the middle of October. He was only given a day's notice, and he spent most of it watching his wife weep and in trying to learn from the sympathising fellow-villagers what the war was all about. As most of them were as illiterate as himself he was not much the wiser for their information, and he knew it, but as vodka was now unobtainable there was nothing to do but to talk. Then at the last moment, when his wife was not there to see, he furtively took down the little ikon from his living room and hid it amongst his clothes. In company with three or four other reservists of his own year he tramped twenty miles to the nearest town, where he received his uniform and rifle. The next day he and thirty or forty others, who had been collected at this point, were put into a troop train and began their long journey across Russia. They were boxed up in covered-in goods vans, and they travelled very slowly. Foma

found things rather dull. Most of his travelling companions came from other villages, and so he and they had little in common to talk about. Sometimes they sang, but for the most part they drank tea in silence and slept. They had been on their way two whole days when, at one of their stopping-places, they found themselves alongside a train composed of carriages painted white and marked with the Red Cross. Foma could see some of the wounded through the windows, and the sight gave him a queer feeling. He gripped at his ikon to see if it was still there, but said nothing. This was only the first hospital train he saw; during the next day one passed by almost every hour. His journey came to an end for a while at a station on the boundary of the Suvalki province. Here the whole train was cleared, and its passengers, with a number of men already on the spot, spent a fortnight in the light duties of guarding the station and keeping the line open.

For the first time he met people who had actually seen the Germans, fought with them, and could tell stories of the devastation they had left in their wake. Foma began to feel unaccustomed resentments working within him. If he had been carefully watched during these days he would have been observed thoughtfully feeling the end of his bayonet or making sure that his cartridges were properly loose in his bandolier.



In the meantime the Germans were advancing. Foma, with a number of others, was sent on to dig trenches. He hated this work at first, but after a few days his animosity had transferred itself to the enemy. The Germans broke through the first lines of defence in their advance, and at last Foma and his companions found themselves face to face with them. For some days they had been living in the uninterrupted roar of artillery, the noise of which had gradually strung them up to a pitch they themselves could not have realized. Besides, for the first time in their lives they had been getting plenty of meat. But a few wily and experienced generals had understood all this when they decreed that there was to be as much bayonet fighting as possible.

Foma's first and last charge was of the Berserker order. When he was picked up later on with a broken leg and with several flesh wounds, he had not the slightest recollection of having killed anybody. But an officer, less carried away by his own excitement, had seen him almost single-handed demolish a small group of Germans, among them a captain. Foma did not understand anything about these things, and when for the first time he became properly awake he found himself in a comfortable bed at Bielostok, with his ikon by his side. A Sister of Mercy tried to explain to him that, in deference

to the orders of a General whose name he heard for the first time, he was to receive special consideration for his bravery. By the time the Sister had got so far, Foma became unpleasantly conscious of the fact that he was in bed in the presence of several strange women, so he went to sleep again as the simplest way out of his embarrassment.

The hospital at Bielostok threatened to be uncomfortably crowded, and, in view of the demands made upon it, every few days a party of the less seriously wounded was sent off to Petrograd, where innumerable "lazarets" had been prepared by the benevolent. Foma, as a hero, went into a luxurious place provided by a noble and began to feel less resentful towards the inevitable Sisters of Mercy. One day the Czar himself, with one of his daughters, paid the patients a visit, and came and spoke to many of them. When Foma's turn came he felt much too shy even to think anything. It suddenly occurred to him that the Emperor was waiting for him to say something in reply, so he said, "Yes, Emperor," at which the Czar smiled, because his question had been "Well, how are you getting on?" Foma was so confused that he did not even notice that the orange and black ribbon of the Cross of St. George had somehow been pinned on to his chest.

A few days later he was considered sufficiently sound to be able to take the air. With four other bandaged convalescents he was taken for walks under the escort of a Sister. Petrograd annoyed him. There was so much bustle and traffic, and the electric trams flew about all over the place with such unnecessary speed, and, what was the worst of all, quite a large number of people did not stop to cross themselves in front of the churches and shrines. Besides, most of the men who were not in uniform wore jackets and trousers, which in his village they called "German" clothes. The churches into which he was taken did not console him very much. Petrograd was a godless place altogether. At last he was considered cured, but as his leg was likely to give way if abnormally strained it was decided to send him home. The thought of getting somebody to write a letter for him to his wife (who would have to find somebody else to read it to her) had never occurred to him. In his idea, if one went to war one either returned or one didn't, and letters made no difference either way. But a Sister suggested that she should write to his wife to say he was coming, and he let her do it. One evening they put him into a train at the Nicolaievsky Station with minute instructions and a little parcel of presents. As the train steamed out he did not even smile, but as soon as the Sister who

was seeing him off had vanished he made sure that his ikon was properly fastened to him.

It had not been possible to give the time of his arrival at the last station, so Foma had to walk a good deal of the way. When he reached his cottage the door was open and he could see his wife bending over the oven at her work. It was evening, so the children were asleep. He entered, feeling more shy than he had ever done since his marriage. His wife turned round and gave him a violent clout on the head. "Scoundrel," she screamed, "what hast thou done with our ikon?"

For a moment Foma stood speechless. Then the sense of contradiction overcame the sense of injury. For the first time it occurred to him that he was a hero.



## CHAPTER V.

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### SOME KULTUR.

It was in Stockholm that we ran into the swarm of Russians released from German prisons after five or six weeks' detention, and destined, like ourselves, for Petrograd. There were several hundreds of them, and more were arriving by every boat and train from the direction of Denmark. They had been gradually transported to Sassnitz, and there put on board Danish steamers, to get back to Russia as best they might. So they had gradually been moved on to Stockholm, where an active Russian Consulate prepared elaborate hospitality and arranged their transit across the Gulf of Bothnia to Raumo, on the Finnish coast. At this particular moment, various German cruisers chose to put in an appearance in the Gulf, to stop all ships, sinking one or two, and to take all men of fighting age prisoners if they were of the nationality of any of the combatant Powers. Various Consuls therefore, came on board our steamers at Stockholm, just as we were about to depart, and emphatically warned their fellow-countrymen not to proceed.

Lest this should be insufficient to check the rash, the captains of the steamers announced that they were not going to risk a passage.

There remained nothing for it but to go by train up one side of the Gulf of Bothnia and down the other, about 1,600 miles in all, with either a boat journey of seven or eight hours or a seventeen-mile drive in the middle, where the railway is as yet unfinished. This way we all went. Trains are slow and connections are wanting on the north and east of the Gulf, for which reason we had six days of one another's company. But the stories the "emigrants" had to tell almost made the journey worth while. They had been arrested in all parts of Germany, and had met with every variety of treatment. A few had been treated with consideration, others with a cowardly brutality of a sickening nature. There was one quiet little old lady whose son had been dying of cancer. There was some hope that an operation might save his life for a while, so she took him to a hospital in Königsberg run by one of her own cousins, for she herself was a Russianized German. The operation took place, and at the same time war was declared. She was immediately arrested and forced to spend two nights and a day in an open yard, the only woman in a large crowd of arrested Russians, closely guarded by insulting German soldiers. She was

then removed to Stettin, where she was treated decently. It took her five days' anxious telegraphing to learn that her son was dead. This is but one of many instances of the extraordinary callousness displayed at almost every point by the German officials. The few honourable exceptions of which we heard were rather in the nature of common courtesy on the part of individuals than of general considerateness.

A large number of the Russians testified to the actual cowardice of their captors in the face of unexpected events. In one place the treatment of all the prisoners was suddenly improved, for no evident reason. This was forthcoming in a day or two; Lemberg had fallen and the Germans were getting nervous. One Russian had been so injudicious as to find himself in Allenstein when war was declared. Here his treatment was entirely bad, until he began to receive fear-exaggerated reports of the Cossacks' onslaught from his own guards, who now behaved with distinct respect. Finally he was removed to Stettin, just before the Russians entered the city. Moreover, I am convinced, from hearing the same statement repeated so frequently by independent persons, that Russian prisoners were treated, on the whole, worse at first than English prisoners. Perhaps this was due partly to the difference in the energy of the Spanish and the American



Consuls who acted respectively for the Russians and the English, but one cannot help suspecting a less worthy motive on the part of the Germans.

At Rostock, on the Baltic coast, the Germans distinguished themselves in many ways. Here over five hundred men, women and children were packed into a prison intended for half the number, for which reason many had to sleep out in the yard on loose straw. The prisoners were insufficiently fed on the German equivalent for skilly, and set to work at a process which, so far as I could gather, resembled oakum picking. A few men protested, and were shot. The slightest offence was punished by a bread and water diet. One Russian represented to the Governor the possibility that the straw in the yard might catch fire, as the weather was hot and dry, and various German officials used to walk about ostentatiously smoking cigars. The Governor's reply, delivered in public, was that if there was a fire, and if anybody tried to escape on that account, he would be shot. One result of this, on top of the bad treatment received, was that an overwrought Russian shouted "Fire! fire!" one night in his sleep. All the other prisoners awoke in panic, a few shots were fired, a number of women had hysterics, and the rest of the night was passed in a horror-stricken anticipation of renewed cruelties. A few doctors who were among the



captives, pointed out that their imprisonment was a violation of the Hague Convention. Whereupon the Governor affected to believe that they were not really doctors, and finally appointed a German medical student to examine them in the rudiments of their art. This youth provided himself with text-books and held a *vivâ voce* examination, commenting on the inferiority of his victim's knowledge in the manner of a promoted schoolboy—which, in fact, he very nearly was. The doctors were, however, not released until the time came to transfer the entire body of prisoners to Sassnitz. Before this took place, all were searched. The men merely had the contents of their pockets looked at, but the women were stripped naked.

The last town in Sweden, on the Finnish frontier, is Haparanda. From here, a long, low wooden bridge runs across a shallow river to Tornea, which is the first town in Finland. At the end of the bridge is a wooden gate, the entrance into Russia. Here stands a little Customs house, with a batch of Russian and Finnish officials and soldiers. We stood and watched the stream of refugees flow over the bridge. The long journey had tired them all, but every face lighted up and smiled as the gate was reached and a passport demanded. Tornea is the end of all things, so far as the map is concerned,

but it is also the beginning of Russia. Everybody felt kindly towards everybody else. Eight unhappy men had lost their passports, and nominally had made themselves liable to all manner of penalties. They stood in a little crowd, trembling. The Chief of the Customs house came out and looked at them. "It's all right, little brothers," he said. "Just you go on to Petersburg; I'll see that it will be all right. Get into the same compartment, it will be much jollier." After which, tired as everybody was, the prospect of the 54-hour journey to Petersburg, in the third-class carriages of a slow train which started at the unholy hour of 3.45 a.m., became rosy. We were all going home together.

## CHAPTER VI.

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### RUSSIA, ENGLAND AND GERMANY.

At first Russia hesitated before making up her mind as to the correct attitude to be taken up towards Great Britain. This suspended judgment expressed itself in many ways. In newspaper caricatures England was politely bantered; thus, one work of art depicting the Allies doing violent execution on a giant Wilhelm, represented the British Army by a bespectacled, professor-like individual in tweeds, performing useful work with a bayonet. Elsewhere our Army is illustrated by a small soldier smoking a long pipe, by a pugnacious little boy, a peripatetic beef-steak (also smoking a pipe), and other unflattering although not unfair presentations. The cause of this quasi-denigration was undoubtedly the resentment aroused in Russia by the suggestions contained in several articles in our Radical Press to the effect that England was fighting in bad company. The British view on the matter was discussed on all sides, and the papers quoted paragraphs almost daily from the English Press, extracting opinions, favourable and

otherwise, from journals as far apart as *The Times* and the *New Age*. Then the Russian Press began to realize that Britain was a factor of far greater importance than was at first believed. When the War broke out there was a distinct inclination to depreciate the value of England's help. But as soon as it became clear that the British Navy had unostentatiously done more damage to Germany, by striking at her economic structure, than all the allied armies put together, this attitude began to go. Only the resentment just referred to, stood in the way of a thorough admiration. There was, it is true, a slight feeling of annoyance at the desires for peace expressed in the *Westminster Gazette* as they were felt to be premature, and the *Gazette* is regarded as a semi-official publication. This, however, gave way before the declarations made by Mr. Lloyd George in his Queen's Hall speech on September 19th, 1914.

Apart from the indiscretions of their Press, the English are extremely popular at the moment. This is largely due to the personality of our Ambassador, whom the Russians call "Sir Buchanan," and who is distinctly one of the best-known figures in Petrograd. There was a semi-official "Patriotic Spectacle-Concert" held here on September 19th, at which a row of boxes were allotted to members of the Embassies of the Allied Powers. These came and were much



applauded, but demands for a speech fell heaviest upon the British representatives. Whereupon one of the Secretaries rose to the occasion and delivered himself of half-a-dozen words in an execrable accent, while the crowd cheered frantically.

The occasion in question provided an admirable illustration of the temper in which Russia is facing the present crisis. The audience, warmed up by national hymns and by a dramatized version of Maupassant's *Mademoiselle Fifi*, nevertheless heartily applauded the reading of an article by Kuprin on the horrors of war. There could be no better piece of evidence to show the absence of the Jingo spirit, especially in view of the fact that the audience contained an abnormally large proportion of men in uniform.

The favourable references made to Russia and her army in the speeches of Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener at the Lord Mayor's Banquet completed the process. The Russian newspapers all printed lengthy extracts with appreciative comments. People began to thaw visibly on the subject of Great Britain. Disgruntled pessimists who until then had been going about dropping the insidious epigram: "England will fight to the last drop of Russian blood," now became silent. A leading newspaper drew attention to the fact that the first recognition of the military qualities

of the Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaievitch had come from "our gallant ally," and others copied its flattering comments. Another bond of union was the publication of the White Paper containing the documents regarding diplomatic relations with Turkey. The most advanced Pan-Slavists began to draw attention to British institutions worthy of being copied—commencing, of course, with concentration camps for German residents.

The attitude towards Germany soon became marked by emphasis. In considering the Russian's attitude towards the German, it should be remembered that there is a population of over two millions of pure German descent in the country, speaking the language of their origin, and keeping up the manners and customs of the Vaterland. These two millions include virtually all the well-to-do inhabitants of the Baltic Provinces. In Petrograd the German language can be heard in every other street even to-day. The Russian, therefore, naturally regarded the German as a near neighbour in times of peace, and entertained for him a certain feeling of platonic affection. At the worst, he was a necessary nuisance. This has all changed now. The Russian Germans threw in their lot at the outbreak of hostilities with the country of their adoption, and have shown no signs of wavering. Those who live here are respected by the *bonâ fide*

Russians, but the German Germans have been cleared out. On one famous night the Embassy was stormed by a huge crowd, and the inside reduced to ruins. The block of statuary on the roof, which alone distinguished the huge new, red granite building from a barracks, has been thrown down, and the windows are now sadly boarded up.\* A body of hotspur students went round the town once early in August armed with ladders and paint-pots, and obliterated as many German names as could be got at in the course of one crowded night. The town officially changed its name. A boycott of all things German ensued. Some practical jokers wrote to the editor of that pillar of Pan-Slavism and implacable foe of all things German, the *Večerneye Vremya* (Evening Times), to say that the title was set in a type which had a Teutonic taint. The editor thereupon replied to the effect that when a title-block was being discussed, it was decided to adopt the lettering employed by the London *Standard* and *Morning Post*. Firms describing themselves as "Gebrüder ——" are now "The Brothers ——," and shopkeepers have been sharply given to understand that internationalism and a knowledge of foreign

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\* It is said that among the peculiar things found in the Embassy during this affair were a mass of proclamations calling on the Russians to rise in revolt, and the body of a dead man.



languages have very definite limits. Caricatures on the lines of our own fortunately obsolescent valentines portray Wilhelm II. grossly and severely. The papers refer to the enemy as Barbarians, Huns, and animals. The Austrians are, relatively speaking, left alone. When they came to engage public attention, it was as prisoners, not as combatants. The unanimity with which Austrian troops surrendered during the first two months of the campaign in Galicia soon resulted in a new labour problem. Here were so many prisoners, reaching a six-figure number, all having to be fed, nursed, etc., and doing nothing for their keep. The Government soon found employment for 23,000 of them. The canals of Petrograd are a reproach to the municipality. They smell unceasingly and with the utmost versatility. So these unhappy Austrians were set to work to clean them out. An official minute stated that the work would be carried on under the most hygienic conditions possible. In considering the Russian's state of feeling towards even the native Germans it must be borne in mind that the latter have always rather held themselves aloof from the Russians. One of the principal inhabitants of the German colony in Petrograd was a man (named Lansgoff) who at the time of the beginning of the War had lived here for thirty-six years, but had neverthe-



less ostentatiously refused to learn the language, and was fond of saying: " If Russians want to talk to me, they can learn my language." When the War broke out he attempted to naturalize himself in order to protect his business, but he had already gone too far. His Teutonic sympathies were notorious, and he had headed a subscription list a year or two before of Germans resident in Russia for the benefit of the German navy. So his application was refused, and as the authorities regarded him as distinctly disloyal, he was sent off to cool his heels in the Archangel Government. But, be it noted, in spite of this man, and many such, there is nothing here to correspond with our " spy " scares. Russia has drastic methods of dealing with *that* variety of German.

About November 1st a strong anti-German and Austrian agitation arose in Petrograd. As in London, people had had enough of spies. The chief police official of the city, Prince Obolensky, issued instructions forbidding the public use of the German language. A few individuals who contravened were fined. All German and Austrian subjects were ordered to leave within a fortnight. Those who had applied for certificates of naturalization were refused. A few attempted to show their loyalty to Russia by joining the Orthodox Church, but this adopted political views

and refused to admit them. A huge number of Germans and Austrians naturally applied to be exempted from this order, but in vain. It was applied all round, the only exceptions made were in favour of sick persons. A good many governesses were also allowed to remain, thanks to the influential positions of their employers. Every day, long trains, composed of third-class carriages with the window-panes smeared over, left the Finland Station for Raumo, *en route* for Stockholm. They stopped at Bieloostrov, on the Finnish frontier, for twelve hours, during which every German was thoroughly searched, and all the money found on them over a certain fixed amount \* was confiscated. The forcibly emigrated were allowed to take no heavy luggage, but their hardships are not for a moment to be compared with those of the Russians who were in Germany when the War broke out.

The *Novoye Vremya*, the principal exponent of Pan-Slavism, is responsible for much of the anti-German feeling. To a certain extent the actions of this paper are entirely creditable; as for example, when it exposes a suspicious German who, in his anxiety to remain in Russia, accepts contracts from the Russian Government far below cost price, so as to secure the immunity granted

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\* This was changed several times. It varied from 50 to 250 roubles.

to holders of contracts with State departments. This man, whether a spy, as hinted, or not, committed a distinctly anti-social action in undercutting standard prices, and it is well to have his doings placarded. But the opposition is carried to much farther extremes. Thus an interminably long series of articles entitled " In the Land of Wonders," describes the visit of a special correspondent to the German-speaking towns in the Baltic Provinces. The writer, one Rennikov, pretends to foam at the mouth at the mention of a German surname. He unearths some interesting details, such as the fact that Count Zeppelin married a wife from the Baltic Provinces, who mortgaged her estates in order to allow him to carry on his experiments, but many of his articles are mere lists of German names, culled from local directories, and pilloried because of their etymology.

Severity of treatment is sometimes carried to lengths which strike one as distinctly excessive. In Riga the hall porter of a large hotel refused admission to a woman who had come to collect money for one of the thousand charitable funds which have sprung up. These collectors, it may be said, working with the best possible motives, manage to make the public rooms of hotels almost uninhabitable by their number and pertinacity. The unfortunate man turned out to be an Austrian



subject, and was promptly exiled to the Province of Tomsk (in the centre of Siberia) by administrative order (*i.e.*, without trial). The *Novoye Vremya* comments approvingly, and calls the man a villain. The necessity for suppressing pro-German sentiment in the Baltic towns is, of course, the justification for this drastic treatment, particularly in view of the undoubted presence in large numbers of men like Baron Heinigen-Hüne and another Baron, who were sentenced to imprisonment in November for concealing horses from the military authorities during a compulsory requisitioning. In Odessa the assembly of more than two adult male Germans, whether inside a house or outside, and all conversations in public in German are forbidden. As we get on towards the end of November, the treatment of the Germans grows in severity. When the fourteen days' notice to leave has yet a week to run, it is rescinded, and those who have not yet secured special exemptions for themselves are given three days in which to decide whether they will go back to Germany, *viâ* Stockholm, or rusticate in the chilly provinces of Archangel, Olonets and Penza. Turks are given the same option, except that Tambov is designated as their place of exile. The hatred of Germany is carried to such a length as to cause a temporary injury to the Russian sense of humour. Hence the announcement in a



Petrograd newspaper that "British children are patriotically refusing to play with German toys and have smashed all they possess." The writer of this priceless paragraph should surely have added that British children have always shown an extraordinary political prescience in this respect. It was a sheer waste of opportunity to have omitted this.

The interruption of the close economic relationship subsisting between Russia and Germany makes it difficult to foresee the final effects of the War upon the industry and wealth of either country. The recent economic development of Russia has been very largely the result of German brains and capital. A petition drawn up by a Russian manufacturer praying for the cancellation of the protection granted to Germans by patent rights mentioned the extraordinary and distinctly lamentable fact that 40 per cent. of the total number of patents issued in Russia are held by Germans. Germany has invested no less than £63,000,000 in the privately-owned railways of Russia, she holds about £30,000,000 of municipal stock and other huge sums in banks and industrial enterprises. To this must be added the amounts invested in Russian undertakings by Germans who, up to the present, have lived in Russia. Although France is Russia's principal creditor, the French have, generally speaking, lent only to



*Reissner*

PETROGRAD, THE NEWSKY PROSPECT.



the Government, and have consequently entered less than the Germans into the economic life of the country. The commercial travellers who used to visit Russia before the War were nearly all Germans.

It would be easy to continue this chapter to almost any length by the enumeration of the traces left by Germans upon the social, political and economic structure of Russia. But what concerns us is the fact that the majority of Russians regard these traces as blights, as parasitic growths which have hindered the development of a genuine Russian culture. For at least a century the Russian has been restively watching the power of Germany becoming greater, and his own countrymen having to subordinate themselves, in a thousand different ways, to the hated Teuton. He would have protested, but mysterious forces held him back. The Germans had friends in high places; the German Embassy had all the prestige of a Russian Government Department; there were always obstacles in the path of the Slavophile. But now he sees his chance. Whatever may be the outcome of the War, the Germans will not return to power in the land they have so long exploited.



## CHAPTER VII.

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### JOURNALISM AT A DISCOUNT.

As in London, innumerable papers solely devoted to war news and photographs have sprung into being, and all the established papers are printing special editions and supplements—sometimes only of a single page. These did well at first, when public interest was very high indeed, but they gave way to the invincible competition of the War Office, which publishes a bulletin twice daily, and has copies of it hung up virtually at every street-corner. The news, so far as one is able to judge, is accurate and fair, without bombast or extenuation. The greater part of it consists of an official communication from headquarters, the rest is telegrams from abroad. In the editing of these the hand of the amateur may be detected. While the bulk of the wires printed give fresh news of some importance, there is a distinct proportion of stop-gap information of a somewhat ludicrous character. Thus, on the day of the announcement of the destruction of Rheims Cathedral, we were also given an extract from the

London *Daily Sketch* of ten days previously, to the effect that a Highgate magistrate had penalized a local man for calling a policeman a "German," as this word had now an offensive connotation. In spite of this and other such lapses from the world-shaking to the ridiculous, this paper, considered as journalism, distinctly deserves respect.

By degrees a little group of war correspondents, British and American, gathers in Petrograd, exchanges confidences regarding private influence at the Ministry for War, and sits down hopefully to wait for the special permits which never come. For the Government is determined to give nothing away. When the War began, the Commander-in-Chief amiably announced that any journalists caught in *flagrante delicto* would be shot. The official communications, although accurate so far as they go, go a very little way. An active censorship is at work on the newspapers, which appear with great blank spaces at interesting points. All letters entering or leaving the country are scrutinized. Those leaving are invariably opened, those entering are generally delayed and arrive at their destinations, whether opened or not, bearing the censorship stamp. Letters from England frequently take a month or even longer to arrive. A notice up in the Telegraph Office in Warsaw describes what may

not be sent by post. There are twenty-five categories of forbidden communications, which include everything a journalist might wish to report, or the public would be interested to learn. An international party of six is granted a special permit, and sails off on a conducted tour, to represent the world's Press. England is not even represented by a professional journalist. These six, closely chaperoned, are taken round various places of interest, but are apparently never allowed to exercise their own choice. A few men start off on private tours of inspection, only to find themselves up against brick walls in the shape of permit-requiring officials, and persons bent on sequestering horses, cameras, notebooks and everything. It is not, therefore, astonishing that at least one war correspondent succumbs, and sends out pleasant little accounts of things seen at an imaginary front from his comfortable hotel in Petrograd. Men of repute gather together, shake their heads, admit that the war correspondent's trade is dead, and that they are but the unlucky survivors, and sigh for the good old times of Bennett Burleigh. Then the papers cease even to repeat the usual "no change" bulletin, and everybody is very dull.

In journalistic circles in Petrograd, the most amazing collection of censored stories have been current ever since Rennenkampf's miserable



fiasco in Eastern Prussia. No good can come of mentioning names, but if half the stories I heard of that abortive campaign are true—and, it must be admitted, they are exceptionally consistent—there must have been an extraordinary lot of Germans in the Russian Army. No doubt after the end of the War, we shall have a statement from some reliable private source, as to what really did happen.

The censorship deals hardly with the Petrograd press. The editor of a daily paper gave me some interesting illustrations of its little ways. On one occasion one of his correspondents in describing a battle stated that the German artillery fire was particularly deadly. This was deleted. The censor, among whose faults inaccessibility is not numbered, explained that he worked on the principle that no mere matters of detail should appear, if they were likely to depress public feeling. A few days later, the report of another fight was submitted, according to which the German artillery worked extremely badly. This was also deleted, on the grounds that it was likely to promote over-confidence. Another case in point related to the descent of Turkish cruisers upon Odessa. The *Novoye Vremya* was allowed to print a long account of what happened, but a condensation of the same story was banned in another paper. An explanation of this may



perhaps lie in the fact that the censorship is worked through a number of elderly generals who are not to be trusted at the front, and for whom some employment is necessary. They are quite wide awake during the day, and so come down heavily upon the evening papers. But, during the small hours of the morning the poor old things are much too sleepy to pay much attention to late news, and in Petrograd the papers are in the press much later than they are in London nowadays. So the morning papers come through comparatively scatheless. They do things better in Moscow, for which reason Moscow papers of the day before have a large sale in Petrograd, as a good deal of locally censored news appears in them.

One of the October issues of *The New Statesman* contained three clever parodies of the different varieties of official communications. One of these was "By wireless from Berlin." A copy of that number of the paper was sent me, but alas, the censor could not bear the suggestion, even in fun, that the Germans were not feeling absolutely depressed, and solemnly deleted the passage.

Yes, the ways of the censor are mysterious. The most marvellous fact of all is that as English papers coming into Russia are dealt with severely, the news which was allowed to pass the

postal censor on its outward journey, is often rejected on its return in print. I have seen copies of *The Times*, of all papers, with a page or two looking like a disordered chessboard. It is actually possible for a war correspondent, anchored in Petrograd, to know less of what is happening in Poland than the suburban reader of a halfpenny London morning paper.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### A FRIENDLY RUSSIAN.

THE following passages are extracts, quoted from memory, from the conversation of a Petrograd gendarme, Gorbunov by name. Before his untimely death, which took place the other day, when he slipped on the ice and was run over, Gorbunov used to spend his working hours in the middle of the street, armed with a large sword and a revolver, regarding all passers-by as potential criminals, or as kind givers of small amounts "for tea." His off-time, however, was occupied less in the consumption of tea than of stimulants, in a certain little public-house, of which he was one of the most regular habitués. He used to sit just under framed notices proclaiming "In Heaven there are no drunkards," and "Sobriety is next to godliness." Here he used to yarn aloud to a small group of friends, to whom he would repeat his hopes that in some other state of existence man could be united to man in loving brotherhood by the wholesale practice of small gifts, and was autobiographical in the illustration of his views. We have extracted a few of the passages which

are more likely to interest British readers. Gorbunov's fallacious view of himself as a sort of super-Sherlock Holmes (if only he had the chance), his craving for strong drink, in the bygone days when it could be had, which enabled at least one burglar to do his work unmolested while the gendarme struggled with the cork—these things do not concern us:

“Hodotov is dead. That is as it should be. A police district inquiry officer\* who ostentatiously refuses all gifts from all persons who come before him has no milk of human kindness. An official should not act in this manner. He should cultivate feelings of friendship and gratitude. I remember Hodotov was once threatened by a rich man, who said: ‘Very well, then; if you don’t do this I’ll go to the Minister and get you the sack.’ Hodotov only smiled and said: ‘As a district inquiry officer I cannot be removed except by the Emperor, and my salary, fortunately, is large enough to enable me to dispense with bribes.’ ‘Bribes,’ indeed! As if a man has not as much right to pay his judge as his lawyer. Russia has no use for narrow men like Hodotov.

(*A few days later.*) “They have appointed a man called Makarov to Hodotov’s post. But

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\* The Russian equivalent to a *Juge d’Instruction*.



he is only an acting district inquiry officer, so that if he does not please the Minister he may be dismissed. But he will certainly do his duty, for he is not so rich as Hodotov, and, moreover, an acting official does not get the entire salary attached to his post. (I wonder who gets the rest.) This should be a lesson to all who will not do as the rest do.

“ These English are strange people. They are not friendly to one like the Russians. This morning a workman came and fetched me into the office of the factory, in which an Englishman was sitting. He was clean-shaven, as they all are, and spoke horrible Russian, as they all do, because their own tongue is so difficult. A drunken workman had fallen downstairs and died. He must have been very drunk. The Englishman wanted me to remove the body, so I took it away with me in a cab. When I reached the station I told them that the man had died in the cab, and that I had seen him fall down in the street, because, of course, I did not want the Englishman to be unnecessarily troubled by Makarov's inquiries. Besides, Makarov is an expensive man, because his salary is so low, and because he is so fond of pleasure. Then I went back to the factory and explained. The Englishman actually refused to give me anything

for saving him no end of trouble! He said he never gave 'bribes.' I said, 'I would refuse a bribe, but I have helped you, and want five roubles for tea.' He was most unreasonable, but at last he gave me the money. I have always heard that the English are a hard race.

"These English are not only hard, but they are rather stupid. There is a little official called Pirojkhov in the Ministry of Trade, who knows me a little. He is a poor man, but he arranges papers for the Minister's signature. To-day he heard that the Minister would be coming to-morrow to sign a number of things, before going abroad for the summer. He looked at the documents in question, and found that one was a paper giving an Englishman permission to trade as a company. As the company looked as if it ought to be very rich, Pirojkhov came to me, and we discussed how we could help the Englishman. At last we decided that I should go and see him and tell him that if he gave me fifty roubles we would make sure that the document would be the first to be signed. Otherwise, if it was at the bottom of the pile, it might not be signed until the Minister returned, and then there might be another Minister, and all sorts of delays. So I went. And the Englishman actually doubted my words, the words of an honest gendarme, who has

always done his duty and copied the examples of those set above him. It took me a solid hour to reason with him, and at last he consented to let us help.

“ So we are fighting the Germans, and the English are helping us. I do not think this is wise, because the Germans are always ready to be friendly, but the English have to be encouraged. But the Emperor knows best. But already a wise man can see what will come of the English helping us. Our high officials and such people will have to grow hard and stupid, like the English, to please them, for the English are too hard and stupid themselves to change at all and grow to be like us. It is already happening. There was a little old German woman who has lived nearly twenty years in one room at —, and when war was declared she, being a friendly person, gave a gendarme ten roubles to report that she had gone away, so that she should not be troubled. She was doing no harm where she was, and he was, of course, glad to help her and to see that she had such a feeling for him. But when they found out, the gendarme was placed under arrest for three months. That is not how the police should be treated. It is as if the English were already here and governing Russia.

“ The country is getting more English every day. They call cigarettes by English names, and one of the officials at my station tried to smoke a pipe a week ago, but he has not been at the office since, and they say he is very ill. Everybody seems to be the same. Late last night I was on duty and a cart came along, and one of the wheels came off. It was loaded with little bundles of clothes for the soldiers at the front, which some committee had collected. I helped the driver to pick up a few things which had fallen out, and saw a beautiful pair of trousers, just my size. So I asked if I could have them for my trouble. Besides, how was one to know that they would reach the men at the front, or that the Germans would not capture them, or that they would fit anybody else properly? But the driver said: ‘ No, brother, they are for the little soldiers.’ It was very mean and uncharitable of him; it would have cost him nothing to be friendly. But all Russia is getting more and more English, and it is very hard for a poor, underpaid gendarme to live.”



## CHAPTER IX.

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### PETROGRAD AT WAR.

THE differences between Petrograd and London strike one at every turn. Here most buildings are painted; barracks, of which the town contains a multitude, are generally red, Government offices are in most cases yellow, with white columns and external decorations. Incidentally, it may be noted that the first ten minutes in Petrograd are liable to be somewhat upsetting to one's preconceived notions. We see queer words over shop windows in a non-Russian language, and learn that they are in Finnish. As we gather the idea in London that the Finnish language has been suppressed in its own country, this display of it in the heart of Petrograd is distinctly surprising. A little farther away from the Finland Station we come to a large new mosque, erected almost on the site of a cathedral recently destroyed by fire. We remember what we have been told about Russian official intolerance, and are once more astonished, but the new illusion soon wears thin.

The streets are wide and long, but that is not

what makes them characteristically Russian. The central part of Petrograd is like an exaggerated Whitehall, with its huge congeries of Government buildings, and open spaces, but it has not the atmosphere of Whitehall. It is, in fact, as if Westminster had been suddenly transferred to the neighbourhood of the Holloway Road. There is an untidy air about the place. Largely this is due to the defective paving, for the streets are paved with cobble-stones, or with hexagonal wooden blocks, laid on the earth. These subside or become frayed at the sides, and in a short time, have a cobble-stone effect. The sidewalks are unevenly laid, with plentiful pitfalls for the unwary. Between the sidewalk and the street, in place of a kerbstone, is generally a bank of cobble-stones, perhaps a yard wide, along which neither man nor beast may walk. In wet weather there are streets here which are literally made up of stepping stones to higher things.

The carriages, perhaps more than any other feature of the streets, tend to give them the characteristically Russian appearance. The shafts are nearly always loosely pivoted on the front axle, and are held in position by an enormous wooden yoke, from which the horse's collar is generally suspended. These yokes are often coloured and carved. The drivers of the public

carriages, the isvoschiks, are placed in front on a little seat measuring not less than two feet wide, yet, so heavily padded are they in their voluminous, dark blue skirts, that they frequently manage to overlap piquantly. They wear an absurd top hat, which becomes larger as it goes higher, with a brim that curves extravagantly. They drive quickly, but they do not seem to know their way about the town very well. They argue ferociously about their fares, setting at naught the legal minima of the official tariff, but, should they receive a tip over the sum finally agreed upon, they bless the donor charmingly.

The crowd in the streets differs from an English crowd mostly by reason of the extraordinarily large number of men in uniform. Soldiers of all grades and retired officers invariably appear in their regulation attire, and at the same time uniforms are worn by practically everybody in the Government service, and by all students at Government institutions, while other semi- or unofficial bodies of men have also their own distinctive clothing. A student of the Polytechnic here exhibits to me the contents of his official wardrobe. First there is a dress for every-day use, consisting of a khaki jacket with green velvet epaulettes and blue trousers and cap. Then there is a dress suit made on the lines of a British Admiral's uniform. There is a still

more elaborate parade dress, with much gold embroidery on the collars and cuffs, and a little sword; this is only used once or twice a year. Finally there is a short thing like a dress jacket, the purpose of which I cannot determine. The ownership and use of all these garments is nominally compulsory, but naturally, the poorer students possess only the everyday uniform. The colour of the epaulettes indicates the Ministry under which the wearer works or studies. Green is the colour of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce; yellow, of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; blue, of the Ministry of Public Education.

Men and women in the crowd cross themselves elaborately at every moment. Here is a church; off goes your cap and you must make the necessary movements. Here is an ikon, before which the same process takes place. Or there is a church or a chapel across the road, or a funeral procession that is passing by. All these things call for the prayers of the Orthodox. It is difficult to be devout and to ride in a tramcar, but not impossible. The action becomes mechanical, the street trader makes the sign of the cross with one hand, while he gives you insufficient change with the other. I have seen Russians of the working class stop in the midst of their little ritual to scratch, and then continue to sign themselves.



One soon notices that in these Petrograd streets there is no such thing as *infra dig*. Priests, tall, long-haired men, six feet of human dignity nearly every one of them, carry through the streets what appears to be their week's washing, inadequately contained in an old newspaper. Veteran officers stalk about, their ability to acknowledge salutes seriously curtailed by the quantity of parcels, of which only a few rise to the dignity of brown paper, carried in each hand. This insouciance expresses itself in many ways: to the Englishman the Russian seems alarmingly casual; to the Russian the Englishman appears unnecessarily fussy and exacting. The Russian believes, with Oscar Wilde, that "punctuality is the thief of time," and refuses to bother himself with a time-table.

A particularly un-English feature of Russian life which soon makes itself felt is the almost incredible stuffiness of virtually every interior one visits. The heavy winters necessitate the universal employment of double windows which, for all practical purposes, ensure that a room is hermetically sealed. 'A little' air is only obtained at the price of an immense deal of exertion, and even then, protests are invariably evoked from every true-born Russian in the vicinity. In railway carriages the same conditions prevail, and the path to unpopularity is easy. Trams have no

upper decks—again on account of the weather—and the amount of overcrowding permitted results often enough in an atmosphere of almost visible quality. Cathedrals and churches burn incense freely; outside the buildings, however, the undisguisable air from within comes out in great hot wafts, to which the incense serves only to give a local, characteristic flavour. The result of all this is that the resisting power of the lungs against cold is soon weakened, and Russians, living in the towns, find themselves peculiarly liable to colds and consumption. Many Englishmen who have lived here, have told me that for one's first winter in Russia ordinary warm winter clothing is sufficient. But after a year or so one's lungs have succumbed to the universal stuffiness and the over-heated rooms, and furs are needed.

The theatres are badly filled. There are no music-halls like those we have in England, at which surplus patriotic emotions can be emitted. There are only one or two inferior circuses, where we can meet many of the variety entertainers rejected by our own tolerant provinces. A great many theatres are putting on topical plays. *The Shame of Germany* is a good illustration of these, and has had a considerable success at the Little Theatre, Petrograd (so called only because at the time at which it was built the already

existing theatres were gigantic). The first act is probably an after-thought, as it has nothing to do with the action. It is an acidulated picture of the German Army Council at work, with a not altogether impossible Bethman-Hollweg, von Tirpitz, and other notables. The next two acts take place in a Russian frontier town. Everybody is in a panic-stricken state, awaiting the arrival of the Germans. Roslavin, who has been educated in Germany, exhorts everybody to have no fear; the Germans are a cultured people who hurt nobody unnecessarily. Then they arrive, and proceed to take all the women prisoners, with an unmistakable purpose. After Roslavin has been killed defending the honour of his wife, the Cossacks arrive. But they are not allowed to execute anybody; their officer stops them, saying: "Russia is too strong to take revenge; and the Russian nation is too great to be cruel." Curtain, amid terrific applause. At other theatres Germany is treated with even less mercy, although with far more humour. Petrograd is probably the only city in the world which contains a sufficient number of persons interested in drama for drama's sake to maintain two parody theatres. These are small places, each holding an audience of perhaps seven or eight hundred. Here Germany, her Kaiser, her culture, her art, her drama, and everything that is hers, is exquisitely



burlesqued. One rather elaborate parody of Gounod's *Faust* is based on the ingenious idea of making the rejuvenated philosopher a sergeant of the Prussian army of to-day. Dumb-show "Scenes from the life of a Conqueror" present the Kaiser in various stages of his career, from his first performance (at the age of ten minutes) on a large drum, to an end allegorically depicted by the removal of his moustaches.

Petrograd shows few of those outward and visible signs of a nation at war, to which the South African campaign accustomed us. Like London, it regards what is happening with the utmost seriousness. There is no half-hysterical flag-wagging; the flag most in evidence is the Red Cross, and there are few others. Fewer officers than usual are to be seen, and khaki of every shade from sage-green to an anæmic yellow has almost ousted the usual uniforms. There are notices up to say that the town is under martial law, but this is the rule rather than the exception. The most striking thing that has happened has been the compulsory closing of all beer-shops and the restriction of the sale of spirituous liquors to restaurants not patronized by the working class. As the Government's spirit monopoly brings in something like £100,000,000 annually, this action was no less self-sacrificing than it was judicious. The quantity of crime in



Petrograd has already fallen to less than one-half and Russians are telling me that they never realised the enormous influence for evil of the unrestricted sale of drink. Indeed, as we shall see later, many of them are already saying that on no account, either during the War or after it, must the ban be lifted. Sobriety has always been one of the least cultivated virtues of the Russian working man, but now not a single drunken man is to be seen anywhere. Perhaps, however, this is an exaggeration; there are times when it is extremely hard to distinguish Ivan drunk from Ivan sober. Late one night, when Petrograd had already "gone dry" for well over a month, I was going home in a tramcar, when one of these marginal cases appeared. He had beautiful blue eyes and a flat Tartar nose, and he wore top boots and a blue blouse under his jacket. He climbed in, sat down and smiled broadly. The conductor came up and asked him for his fare. The man said sleepily: "I'm not going to pay any fare. I'm just going on until the tram has stopped twice, and then I'll get off." The conductor: "I can't carry you about for nothing, you know; five copecks, please." The man, still smiling, and apparently talking in his sleep; "Oh, that's all right, little brother; I shan't pay you anything, and I'll get off the second time the tram stops." And he was right, both times.

But the absence of drunkenness is, after all, a purely negative indication that great things are happening. The khaki uniforms, the perpetual movement of small parties of soldiers to and fro, the appearance of occasional automobiles and tramcars carrying wounded soldiers from the stations to the thousand-and-one public, private, and amateur hospitals, the array of private motor-cars lined up on the Marsovoye Polye (Field of Mars), to be bought, if approved of, by the Ministry for War, the special services at the cathedrals and churches, intercessory and memorial, for those who are at the front or who have already fallen, these are some of the new and more obvious signs of change.

The war has brought changes to the externals of religious life. Petrograd contains thirteen Orthodox cathedrals, of which a few, to-day more than ever, present the appearance, both inwardly and outwardly, of Temples of Mars. The Cathedral of the Transfiguration bears this characteristic in an altogether unpleasant degree. The church is surrounded by a railing, of which the uprights are made out of captured cannon, mainly Turkish. Inside the railing, in front of the church are a dozen more cannon, mounted on their carriages. The interior is decorated by numerous sheafs of captured banners, with various weapons, uniforms, and other relics; these

again have in most cases been captured from the Turks. Cannon and other warlike implements enter into the designs on the pediment and elsewhere. Now, in the side-chapels, lie the confined bodies of officers killed at the front, and women steal in silently; perhaps to go out again after a minute's tearful meditation, or perhaps to stand at the head of the coffin and there to chant a few prayers. From the immense Kazan Cathedral the banners and eagles captured from Napoleon have been removed. Here, in the mornings, are special prayers for those at the front, and one sees the priests reading the names of soldiers, for whose safety particular intercessions are made, from slips of paper handed them by the men's relatives.

It is September 8th (o.s.) and the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin. Nearly all the shops are shut and there is a general holiday. In the Cathedral of Saint Isaac an immense crowd has gathered, a crowd in every possible sense different from an English congregation. Here men are in the majority, and uniforms, as usual, are in abundance. But the behaviour of the crowd is even less English than its composition. Men and women of all ages cross themselves repeatedly, fall upon their knees, and even touch the marble pavement (when there is space) with their foreheads. Others bow low before the sacred



ikons, and kiss their frames and glass covers. Every member of the congregation appears to be intent upon his own private prayers, although all the time the wonderful choir of men's and boys' voices is singing, unaccompanied. Suddenly the tune changes, the choir breaks out into a triumphant measure, and the whole crowd bows low and crosses itself. A magnificent bass soloist is heard, and we recognise how Shaliapin received his training. A hush falls over all present, for the first time we become aware that, until the soloist began, there was a continual coming and going among the congregation, but now all are subdued, reduced to silence by the sheer weight of this man's voice. The spell lasts for a minute, and is then broken by the high notes of the choir boys. The crowd crosses itself, a curious tremor, something in the nature of an unattached sob, runs through the huge gathering. As we leave the Cathedral we receive a slight shock at the sight of a number of soldiers, who had been present at the service, being lined up and marched off. The contrast between the spontaneity of their acts of adoration and this deliberate exhibition of subordination horrifies one a little at first.

And so one might go on for ever, picking up and describing odd points of difference between Petrograd and the capitals of Western Europe.



But a single point will serve in conclusion, for it seems to epitomize the change which is undoubtedly taking place—and who can tell where it will end? Almost at the widest part of the Neva is the Angliskaya Naberejhnaya, the English Embankment, where the British Embassy and Church are to be found. Here are always to be seen nowadays one, perhaps two or three, luxurious steam yachts, the private boats of the Emperor. Their presence is most significant. They mean that in these days the Emperor is in the habit of steaming up to Petrograd from Tsarskoye Selo, disembarking at the Quay, and then driving to pay visits among the innumerable private hospitals in which his soldiers are recovering from their wounds. The Emperor has no longer cause to regard himself as a probable target when he drives in public. That, better than anything else, indicates the great change which took place in August, 1914.

## CHAPTER X.

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### EXCITEMENT, SEEN AND UNFORESEEN.

ON October 21st, 1914, the Council of Ministers published an order which, at any other time, would have caused an attempt at revolution. In Russia, military service is compulsory upon all healthy youths who have attained twenty years of age, who are not only or youngest sons, and who are not exempted by virtue of a few miscellaneous provisions, one of which is attendance at a university. Only a year or so ago, when the Government turned one of its medical colleges in Petrograd suddenly into an Army Medical College, and every student there unexpectedly found himself on the way to become an army doctor, there were considerable and very audible outbursts of indignation, which were not calmed down until after some violence had occurred. Now the Council of Ministers is about to begin training all the students whose age and health satisfy the requirements of the Ministry of War, with

a view to getting a large reserve of sub-lieutenants from which the inevitable gaps may later be filled. This, it will be seen, is virtually a call to active service; a far more drastic step than the conversion of civilian into military doctors. A year ago it would have meant bloodshed in the streets of Petrograd; to-day it has evoked such enthusiasm as the city has seldom seen. Here, be it remembered, all public demonstrations are forbidden. Even while Russian victories were being cheered in the streets of London and Paris, Petrograd maintained a superficial (but not an apathetic) silence. Not since that day, early in August, when an enormous crowd attacked the huge and hideous barrack-like structure that was the German Embassy, destroying its contents and heaving down upon the pavement the crowning horror of an immense group of copper statuary, has a public demonstration of any description made its appearance. But the students recked little of official permission and the like. Disregarding even the sympathetic but half-timid protests of the Rector of the University, Professor Grimm, something like eight thousand students formed up in excellent order, and with bared heads followed the portrait of the Emperor and the National Flag through the streets, singing "God Save the Tsar." They stopped to cheer before the Embassies of all the Allies, and

gathered salutes from the British and Belgian, kisses and " God Save Holy Russia " from the French, and speeches from the Japanese and Servian national representatives. Before a Cathedral the whole body of demonstrators knelt for a few moments in prayer. The procession covered over six miles.

It is Tuesday, November 3rd. The streets are decorated with flags—always the same tricolour, the white, blue and red stripes of the Russian Empire. Shops are shut, people wear their best clothes and overcrowd the churches and the places of amusement alike. It is the twentieth anniversary of the accession of the Emperor. But this is not the only important event of the day. Everybody is reading a liberally displayed manifesto, wherein

By the Grace of God,

We, Nicolas the Second,

Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., etc., etc. [a complete list of these etceteras would cover at least a page].

Do announce to all Our true subjects:

Germany and Austria-Hungary, striving by all possible means to increase their strengths



in their hitherto unavailing struggle with Russia, have run for aid to the Ottoman Government, and have led Turkey, blinded by them, into war with Us. . . .

In complete security and confident in the help of God, Russia will face this new aggression of the ancient enemy of the Christian Faith, and of all the Slav nations.

Not for the first time will the gallant Russian Army subdue the Turkish bands—this time, too, will it vanquish the insolent enemy of Our Country. With the whole Russian People, We steadfastly believe that the present ill-advised interference of Turkey in the war will only hasten the day of her fate, and will open to Russia the path to the solution of the historical problems bequeathed her by her forefathers on the shores of the Black Sea.

People read this historical document, shake their heads and say, "It's come at last," or words to that effect. Ever since the war began, the incursion of Turkey has been awaited—and, indeed, prayed for, by the Orthodox. At the same time there is just now a feeling that no treatment will be too bad for Bulgaria if she should step in as Turkey's Ally. "Russia created Bulgaria," is the common justification for this

attitude. In Russia the war with Turkey of 1877-8 is officially entitled: "The War for the Liberation of the Balkan Christians."

So in the evening we all walk down the Nevsky Prospect, illuminated for the occasion by innumerable brightly-coloured electric lamps, and feel none of the emotions of a plunge into a wild adventure.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### A MEMBER OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA.

VLADIMIR IVANOVITCH NIKTOROV invited me to lunch that day, otherwise I, a mere outsider, would scarcely have been present to witness such a flare-up. For I only knew the old gentleman by repute, and my introductions to him were of a somewhat casual nature. He had nevertheless behaved charmingly to me at our first meeting, and had ended with an invitation. He was, I should explain, a merchant, always on the point of retiring, aged about sixty-five, a strict member of the Orthodox Church, and the father of a large family.

So I went. At the appointed hour I bore the suspicious scrutiny of the *dvornik*\*, and ascended in a lift to the second floor of the huge block of buildings in which Niktorov lived. When I entered his flat he was in despair. His white hair and beard strayed wildly in all directions. He was even in his shirt-sleeves—and no Russian could ever indicate his consternation by his

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\* The hall-porter, *concierge*, police-agent, and emergency valet who infests every building in Petrograd.

attire in a more striking way than that. For in Russia you keep your coat on. It is more respectful to be seen nude than clothed, but with no jacket. Even as Niktorov was greeting me, one of his maid-servants attacked him from behind and forced a coat on to his unwilling shoulders.

I had not long to wait for the reason of his distress. He flourished a copy of the day's *Novoye Vremya* under my nose, and shouted, "There, look at that! The younger generation! What are they coming to? Look, read!" And he pointed to an advertisement in the column in which would-be secretaries and clerks apply for vacant situations.

All I could see was something like this (supposing it had appeared in an English paper): "Young woman, intelligent, finished at the University, knows German, French, shorthand, typewriting, wants a situation as secretary. Reply, stating wages offered, to M. V. N.——." The address was that of Niktorov's flat.

"Your daughter?" I hazarded, not understanding wherein lay the offence.

"Yes, worse luck. That ever a daughter of mine should call herself 'intelligent'! It's unheard of, it's wicked, it's even immoral!" He crossed himself rapidly, bowing to the ikon in the corner of the room.



“ But, why not? ” I asked. “ Surely we none of us can claim to have a monopoly of intelligence ”

Niktorov drew himself up proudly “ You, sir, perhaps come from a country blessed by God, and so devoid of an intelligence. But here we have one, and may the Lord deliver us! ” Once more he crossed himself and bowed to the ikon.

The matter was getting puzzling. Niktorov, fortunately, decided to explain.

“ We, in Russia, have amongst us a number of people, mostly young and irresponsible, who call themselves the intelligentsia. Which means simply this,” here he began to work himself up, “ that there are a lot of fools, yes, fools, who read the books of a lunatic Pole called Nietzsche, who believe his doctrines (which are those of the Anti-Christ, as Solovyev has shown), who are a law unto themselves, who commit the sins of the flesh, repudiating holy and lawful marriage, who are not truly loyal to the Emperor, God bless him! ” (more crossing and bowing), “ and who even profess to disregard the teachings of the Church What could be worse than that, I ask you? What could be more odious? They don’t dress like Christians, they play at revolution; they play at literature, they play at all sorts of beastliness, some of which I would not like even to name to you, and . . . now, my daughter,

my own daughter . . . calls herself 'intelligent.' It's too bad, too bad!"

Niktorov was positively crying! He paused to recover himself, then continued in a slightly different strain.

"I have three sons in the Army, and two of my daughters are Sisters of Mercy. All my other children are working with me, in my business, except only Maria, who wanted to see how other firms did their work. And, believe me, until I saw this advertisement I never knew that she considered herself an intelligent. Of course, I had my suspicions; we all suspect the younger generation. They read such books! Tolstoy is nothing to them. All sorts of foreigners—well, you yourself know what English and French writers are like. Oh, Maria . . . ."

At this moment a maid entered, and announced that lunch was on the table. Besides Vladimir Ivanovitch and myself, only one of his sons was present—a taciturn youth, named Boris. My host controlled himself, but was most gloomy. The conversation gradually drifted into a monosyllabic dialogue between father and son on some business matter. It was all very boring.

Suddenly someone was heard at the door. There was a sound of goloshes being slipped off in the hall. Niktorov looked even gloomier than before. A bright girl, about twenty-four years of

age, dressed in far better taste than I personally should have credited to a lady intelligent, rushed in, hugged her father, kissed him almost ritually, and sat down to lunch with us.

Her father introduced her as the reprehensible Maria Vladimirovna, but she scarcely stopped to hear my name.

"Father," she shouted, "I've got my job! I'm to be the secretary of a Red Cross Hospital in Poland! They wanted somebody with some business experience, and so there you are. Isn't it lovely to think I shall be helping the Army!"

Niktorov's expression changed. He was no longer the stern and implacable parent. "Oh, my dear little girl, Mashenka! Then you are not really one of those enemies of God and the Emperor, not one of those wicked revolutionaries! My dear, dear girl! What a relief!"

Maria Vladimirovna seemed surprised. Then she turned to me for the first time and said, quite simply, "What silly ideas have you been putting into his head?" And, I regret to say, Niktorov never said a word in my defence, while his daughter launched out into a torrential exposition of the necessity for women to supervise hospitals and fathers. Boris, I equally regret, was also silent. In fact, I rather think he went away before his sister had done.

Now, I ask, is it fair that I, a stranger and a

foreigner, should be accused by a delightful young woman, of attempting to poison her father's mind when, in the first place, I am innocent; and in the second, do not yet see what harm there is in the description of a person as intelligent?



## CHAPTER XII.

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### IN MOSCOW: AN IMPRESSION.

Moscow is calmer even than Petrograd. German merchants and shopkeepers continue as usual, and nobody pays them any marked attention until the war is nearly three months old, when some little tactlessness on their part leads to a raid and some destruction of shops and stocks. Moscow knows it is the heart of Russia, and is determined to palpitate no more than usual. But the suburbs deny the superficial apathy of the centre. The outskirts of Moscow are literally a mass of temporary hospitals. The Red Cross flies from every house which looks as if it might be convertible into a hospital, and from a great many which do not. Every day, almost every hour, fresh hospital trains bring wounded from Kovno, from Bialystock, and from Poland in general. With them come large numbers of closely guarded and depressed-looking folk, many suffering from slight wounds, nearly all tattered and unmilitary in appearance. These are the prisoners, who make

only a short stay in Moscow, and are sent on into the extreme provinces. Moscow is over eight hundred miles from Warsaw, and the slow hospital trains cannot cover the distance in less than forty, perhaps forty-eight hours. This fact is a further evidence of the enormous number of wounded in the Russian Army. As no casualty lists of private soldiers are published, it is impossible to learn the true state of affairs, especially as gaps in a regiment at the front are always promptly filled. We learn only that the Commander-in-Chief has made humane arrangements whereby regiments who have suffered considerable losses under fire are allowed long periods for recuperation, and that efforts are made not to expose the same soldiers to severe fire too frequently. A curiously high proportion of the wounded soldiers are damaged in the right hand or arm.

The Kremlin has partly returned to its original function, and is now something of a fortress, where guns taken from the Austrians rub shoulders with those left behind by Napoleon. The show places are closed, so that there are few visitors about to disturb the illusion and the characteristic Russian effects of the colours, the soldiers, and the old women. In the great squares soldiers are being drilled. As they march they sing, and their singing is considerably better than their marching. A magnificent bass sings one

line, and the whole squad sings the next, to the great delight of the old women, who sell apples and queer sweets made of poppy-seeds and sugar. A few convalescent soldiers look on critically, and chat with the sentries who guard all the safest objects. The old cannon which still afford to smile at the German 42-centimetre guns, is one of these. It was cast in 1586, and its bore measures inches to the others' centimetres! Another sentry "protects" the huge cracked bell which might well be used as a chapel, and weighs about 200 tons. The cathedrals and chapels of the Kremlin also wear an abnormal aspect as the result of the war. The little Church of St. Nicolai Gostunsk is particularly well filled by soldiers at their private devotions, for it is dedicated to the patron saint of engaged lovers. In the Uspensky Cathedral, where there are many sacred relics and buried saints, a little crowd of convalescent soldiers of all grades are giving thanks for their recovery. With them are a few women, gratefully kissing all the available ikons. In a little chapel of the Archangel Cathedral, where forty-seven Russian Tsars are laid, an old woman asks me if there are any saints. I reply in the negative; there are only Tsars. She is incredulous, kisses the nearest sarcophagus with cautionary reverence, and departs. I go to see who was the momentary object of her adoration,

and find that the tomb she has kissed is that of Ivan the Terrible.

It is extremely wet, but there is one sensation which is not to be omitted. I must go outside Moscow to those hills from whose crest Napoleon first saw the city. This is one of the recognised duties of travellers. They take an electric tram to a suburb of Moscow, there they get on to another one, riding past *art nouveau* villas, and over much mud, and finally they ascend. They then pretend that for the first time they see the city. They repeat the Russian proverb (if they know it : I have forgotten the exact words myself) which calls distant Moscow a new Jerusalem ; and they do their best to imagine themselves to be Napoleon. This is easy, because there is a large and expensive open-air restaurant where drinks may be had by the rich, and a little lower down, where the view is less distant, are booths for the poor, where also drinks are to be bought. But that was before the war. To-day the view remains, but there are no drinks, except kvass and lemonade. So that there are few sight-seers.

It was raining, I was saying, but it looked as if it should be stopping soon. So I blundered about from one tram-line to another, and at last got on to the right route and made the ascent. I was all alone except for a small party of actors,



they must have been, who were killing time by arguing with the tram-conductor. And, now I come to think of it, the tram-conductor was a woman, whose husband was at the front. She and the actors argued about the tram-route, they insisting that she did not know where the tram was going, and asking about the restaurant at the end of the journey—would it be open, and if not, how long would it be before the tram started back again?—and so on.

Well, we got there at last. There was a fine clear view, for the rain had stopped; the hill, with the Kremlin crowning it, was in the middle of the picture. Just to the right was the enormous gilt dome of the Church of the Redeemer, and in front and all around were hundreds of those pear-shaped domes, all gilt, or blue or white. There was a slight haze, but not sufficient to drown the colours. And I sat down and waited for the emotion.

No, that is not quite right. Nobody would expect a real and large emotion to come and find him in the open air, when the weather was very damp, and a drink of whatever character unprocurable within a penny tram-fare. But I thought of the history they had taught me when I was at school, when it was explained that Napoleon believed that Moscow was the heart of Russia, but believed wrongly, for Russia was "a primitive organism" which had no heart. Was

this the heart of Russia, or was it a mere incident? Had the historian erred in speaking of brick and mortar, when he should have been thinking of men and their sentiments? Yes, perhaps he had. Perhaps Napoleon had, too; it may not have occurred to him that the two were separable.

We return to Moscow, to the irresistible Kremlin, and the Red Square by its walls. The Red Square, a suggestive name. For here, outside the fantastic Cathedral of St. Vassili, is a small round platform which is called "The Place of the Skull." On this spot the False Demetrius was hailed Tsar, and on this spot, two years later, he was put to death by Boris Godunov. Ivan the Terrible used to stand in a certain turret on the Kremlin wall watching his victims die. There, too, the Empress Sophie was shut up by Peter the Great, as soon as he had spread his wings, so that she should witness the execution of those nonconformist Old Believers who had her sympathy. Yes, the place fairly reeks of Russian history. It was burnt down in 1812, as every child knows. But not the whole Kremlin, by any means. There is an ikon here, of great antiquity, which has hung over one of the gates for many centuries. And whenever Moscow was in danger, the ikon was taken down, and carried in front of the Army. It was a miracle-working ikon, and by its help the enemies of Moscow, Mongol and

Pole, were often routed. And when the Kremlin was on fire the ikon remained in its place, and those who knew feared that the glory of Russia was in danger. For if the image was destroyed by fire, whence could Russia expect to be miraculously succoured? But when the flames had died down, and Napoleon and his army had started on their melancholy return journey, it was seen that the ikon was still in its place, and that the lamp before it was still burning, although it had not been filled for some weeks. Then the Russians knew that victory was to be theirs.

It is very wet, but Moscow is distinctly getting hold of me. I would not have believed that story about the ikon a week ago. But now I know it is true, and that the people who pack themselves, like so many sardines, upon the floor of the little Chapel of the Iberian Virgin, and ask for special and exclusive favours, they, too, are not deceived.

But Moscow does not fix one in the past as do those dead cities of Holland, in which anything modern would be unthinkable. The past and the present are here, especially the present.

A group of people stand before a poster freshly stuck on a board. They are grinning cheerfully. The notice is to say that next Sunday a large auction sale will take place in public, when a quantity of goods captured from the Austrian and German armies will be disposed of—carts, horses,

shirts, barbed wire, quantities of metal goods (character unspecified), horse sheets, harness, etc., etc.

The cheerful grins are characteristic of Moscow. People are livelier than in Petrograd. There are more dead Tsars here, but the dead past does not weigh so heavily on the people. Nothing does, in fact. Perhaps it is because they are living on a hill, and in sight of hills. This is distinctly a live place.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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### FROM MOSCOW TO WARSAW.

By the time the train had started on its thirty-seven hour journey my third-class carriage was extremely full. It is true that it did not contain its full complement of passengers, but that was more than compensated for by the baggage. Besides the normal impedimenta, the Russian takes food enough with him to tide him over the most interminable delays, and, if the journey is to be a long one, he will always have a pillow and blankets tied up in a manner which suggests a suffocated baby.

We sorted ourselves out and conversation began—or, at least, that shapeless alternate questioning and autobiography which passes for conversation in Russia. There was a woman with her son, who wore a cadet's uniform, and two other cadets, obviously brothers. These soon discovered that Vilna was their common destination—to be precise, the Military Academy of that town. They found, too, that what was taking them all to Vilna was the expectation of a commission. The one had already been partly trained at Simbirsk,

the others at Samara. They had all been three days *en route*. The mother asked, "How many documents have you got?" The reply was, "I have fourteen, my brother has thirteen." Then, in her turn, the mother added, with a distinct touch of pride, "We have seventeen. And, please God, Dimitri will get his commission. This little talk struck me as perhaps the most typically Russian bit of conversation I ever heard. The mother expressed the feelings of a whole race when she put her trust in God, red-tape, and self-sacrifice, as she did. All the way to Minsk, where they changed, she kept her eye strictly on Dimitri to make sure he was well covered up and not doing anything to make him catch cold. "He won't pass the medical examination if he catches a cold," she explained in self-justification and with some fear to the other cadets.

The railway to Warsaw follows the line of Napoleon's march to Moscow and his retreat from it for more than 400 miles. First we passed through Borodino, where on September 7, 1812, Napoleon broke through the Russian defences at the cost of more than a quarter of his Army, and cleared the road to Moscow. It was midnight when we reached Smolensk, 184 miles from Borodino. Napoleon took three weeks to cover this distance. And two months later he was back again at Smolensk, trying to put a backbone into

the demoralised remains of his Army. Early the next morning we crossed the Beresina, almost on the spot where the great French Army was finally beaten by the Russians on the icy river, and became a mob of stragglers, lamely and blindly struggling across the frozen wastes, only too glad to barter all the loot of Moscow away for what the local Jews could provide in the way of food, clothing, or horses. One realizes, as one crosses these swamps, these vast uncultivated spaces, that Russia cannot ever be invaded from the west, save by nomads—and their day is gone. The terrible monotony of the unchanging landscape would take the heart out of any invading army.

At Smolensk a little Ukrainian (or Ruthenian, or Little Russian) school teacher got in, and two Jews — her neighbours — immediately became interested in her. She explained that she taught in a school at Holm, but that when the Austrians were making their fruitless attack on that part of Russia, early in August, she had been transferred to Smolensk. Now the Russians were in Galicia, and all was safe, so she could return. She said she was paid £50 a year, plus £20 extra allowance for gymnastics and some other subject, and seemed to think the total a very respectable one. So did one of the Jews, who promptly suggested that she should marry his son.





THE ISVOSCHIK.





Declined with thanks. Then he turned on to me, and a quarter of an hour later he was trying to induce me, whom he had taken for a commercial traveller, to peddle his silks for him after I returned to England. I temporised. Then we talked about Russia and England; to be exact, he did most of the talking, after the manner of his kind, and said, among other things: "England is a great country. She has three Jewish generals, and 374 officers in her Army. She has Jewish M.P.s, and Lord Isaacs and Lord Samuel are Jews. Lord Melbourne and Lord Disraeli were Jews, too." Then he suddenly changed the subject. "You come from London, do you not? There is a great Russian Prince who lives there, Prince Kropotkin. He is a Rurikovitch,\* and he has a better right to be on the throne than Nicolas. If he were Emperor there would be no need for a Revolution." But the other Jew stopped him at this point, for in Russia it is inadvisable to talk to strangers about revolution.

Oh, that ghastly journey! For thirty-seven hours we sat or lay in carriages from which air was excluded by double glass windows, screwed down for the winter, and by threefold doors. We slept (more or less) on wooden shelves, one above the other, and as my carriage contained four

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\* Descendant of Rurik, the first King of Russia (862-879).

compartments running into one another, the atmosphere of some twenty-four persons mingled thickly, almost to asphyxiation. I changed my own air by frequent visits to the adjoining third-class buffet, where one had a glass of tea for twopence, in a compartment decorated at the expense of the Government with a sixpenny ikon and a bunch of artificial flowers. Every few minutes almost, it seemed, we passed a train-load of wounded, returning from Poland. Every half hour, or even oftener, we had to stand aside to let a troop-train pass us. For the last 300 miles of the journey the line was guarded by sentries standing a hundred yards apart.

The trip of 807 miles cost only nineteen shillings and ninepence, third class, but it was the last time I economised in this manner. It was early morning when we reached Warsaw, but I do not know what hour it was, because Warsaw time is not the same as Moscow time, and the trains run by Petrograd time anyway. Outside the station a submissive little crowd of Austrian prisoners was limping wearily to the train that was to take them into the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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WARSAW, OCTOBER 1914.

IN the perverted idiom of the geography primers, Warsaw stands upon the Vistula. In strict accuracy it stands upon the west, or left bank; transpontine Warsaw consists only of an industrial suburb called Praga, and the railway stations for Moscow and Petrograd. The river banks slope steeply, and the Vistula itself is five or six hundred yards wide, and crossed by three massive bridges. About nine hundred thousand people live there, and a third of them are Jews.

Warsaw has much of the international and little of the metropolitan. Abolish the bi-lingual street signs, and little is left to indicate that this is the heart of Poland. There are new and florid buildings, which might easily have been exported from any town in Germany in *art nouveau* style at its worst. There are masses of uninteresting, neuter buildings which might be duplicated in every town of Europe. There are structures which have obviously been copied from France—and these are the most tolerable of all—and a



few Orthodox churches in the usual Byzantine style. There are ramshackle hideousities which remind one of the pre-Ruskinian human warehouse. Architecturally speaking, there is everything, in fact, which is European, but next to nothing that is distinctively Polish. Along the Krakowskie Przedmiescie, the Nowy Swiat, the Marszalkowska—the principal streets of Warsaw—the rank, beauty and fashion walk in sufficient quantity to prevent our forgetting that this is Poland. But of the other parts of the city, a different tale is to be told. More than perhaps any other town in Europe, Warsaw has had its historic days. (In the vernacular, Warsaw is feminine, but the impression the place leaves is so entirely sexless that we must perforce be content with the neuter pronoun.) Six times during the last two centuries has the city been besieged and taken. In 1905 and 1906 it was here, more than in any other town in the Russian Empire, that the casting (in both senses) of bombs was demonstrably the work of finished artists. Polish history, from 1600 onwards, becomes a desert if Warsaw is removed. What are now grimy streets were once the scenes of heroic encounters. Beyond the town, to the west, lies the Pole Elekcyj Królow, where, after 1572, the kings of Poland were “elected,” to the accompaniment of immense gerrymandering and

bloodshed. This particular spot, where the Polish Diets also sat, which is to Poland much as the Moscow Kremlin is to Russia, is now half covered with wretched buildings, and partly by a Jewish cemetery of appalling desolation. Two miles away, in the suburb of Wola, lies the "last ditch" of the Polish rebellion of 1831, in the shape of gently sloping earthworks. Here, too, a dilapidated modern cemetery deprives one of the power of imagining the authentic corpses on the authentic occasion. Warsaw's past has left few marks upon her outward view.

A week before the Germans came, in spite of the official denials of their approach, a curious excitement prevailed in the town. This was fostered by many really trivial details as well as by the peculiar local political conditions. In the first place, there was a shortage of small change. In view of the fact that Warsaw was largely cut off, for practical commercial purposes, from the rest of Russia, this is not to be wondered at, but the blame fell on the local Jews, who were credited with having hoarded up immense quantities of silver roubles. However, the Government Bank discovered in its cellars a huge store of one-rouble notes, printed in 1898 and never used, and all was well. Then the supply of coal was found to be extremely limited. As goods trains had almost ceased to run, this, too,

was not to be wondered at, but, as usual, the blame fell on the Jews. Subsequently a shortage of other necessities of life came to light, but the authorities took the bull by the horns by fixing maximum prices, which scarcely exceeded the normal level, and so, for once in a way, the Jews were not blamed. The supply of milk, however, almost gave out.

It was my fortune to hear a sermon by the Orthodox Archbishop of Warsaw, in the beautiful new Cathedral of St Alexander Nevsky, which enabled me to realise what it was some Russians meant when they spoke of the war as a "Holy War." The Cathedral was crammed; and about two-thirds of the audience consisted of men, and about a half of these were soldiers. The Archbishop is a man of perhaps seventy years of age, with a white beard and an impressive manner. He spoke as if to little children, coming down into the centre of the Cathedral, where, with a background of gorgeously arrayed priests, he held forth and gently emphasized his points by slight movements of his finely shaped hands. The sermon consisted of a number of simple, affirmative statements, delivered without a trace of malice or a shade of misgiving. The war was a Holy War. The gallant Russian soldiers were taking the Cross of Christ into lands where it was as yet unknown. God loved the Russians, and



gave them victory. The enemy's attacks must always fail. If Our Lord were on earth, He would fight with the Russian soldiers, who were so splendidly doing His work. Those who fell need have no fear; they would die doing God's work, and would be certain of a great and immediate reward. There was no mention of Allies, no hint of a western front. From the Archbishop's words it could only be deduced that Russia, the Divine, was fighting a nameless enemy, the Satanic. This sermon made a number of things heard and seen comprehensible to me. In any Christian country but Russia, a little restaurant conversation I heard would be unnatural. Several elderly and bearded merchants were talking about the war, and the great difficulty of achieving a speedy and final victory. "We must pray, brothers, we must pray," said one of the eldest men, and with that the conversation ended. There was no more to be said after that: Russia's prayers are always answered, one soon comes to learn.

In the streets of Warsaw there were no flags, no banners. In the shop-windows one saw the plentiful evidence of the hope of a national renaissance in the near future, according to the promise of the Grand Duke Nicolas Nicolaevitch. But it is part of the Polish pose to appear apathetic, hence no excitement was visible. A few of the theatres remained open, at one of them



*The Merry Widow* was being performed, with a fine disregard for the country of its origin. A curious street scene, characteristic of Russian institutions, were the long queues of women who on certain days line up outside some pawnshops. This did not, as might be surmised, indicate any excessive poverty; on the contrary, these were the wives of men on active service, who had come to receive their separation allowance. The pawnshop is generally a municipal institution over here, and the authorities apparently thought one pay-office was as good as another.

During the first days of October, the principal streets of Warsaw were filled by endless processions of soldiers and military appliances. It is said that at one time there were half a million soldiers in the town itself. A great number of these came from Siberia and the less accessible provinces of Russia. There were little men with flat and yellowish faces, distinguishable from the Japanese only by the horizontality of their eyes. There were innumerable Cossacks, who loved nothing better than, when the street was comparatively clear, to gallop along at a breakneck pace, perched well in front, and moving up and down as if rider and horse were one. There were tall and handsomely bearded Circassians, of magnificent build, and almost feminine waists. And there were dare-devil

fellows from the Kirghiz Steppes, still in that uncivilised state of mind which looks on war mainly as an opportunity for looting. Some of these last thought Warsaw was Berlin, and wanted to start raiding right away, and were bitterly disappointed because this pleasure was refused them. They had to be conducted through the town from the station between a double line of Russian soldiers, to avoid the possibility of depredation, and were encamped just outside Warsaw. Practically every man of them had a few empty sacks tied on to the back of his horse's saddle. "What are you going to put in these?" one was asked. "Something will turn up," was the cheerful answer. Then, continuing in a loud whisper, the Kirghiz himself questions: "Do you know if the Germans wear gold or silver watches?" All these different soldiers failed to provide anything in the nature of a pageant. Colour was almost absent from their uniforms. All the men wore light brown, all the officers light grey overcoats. Only a few Circassians and Cossacks showed themselves in their dark red or blue uniforms. The armoury carried by every Cossack was a matter of wonder to the inhabitants. Every man had a lance, a sword, a dagger, a rifle, a revolver, and a nagaika, which is a whip with leather thongs and a large lump of lead in the middle, an instrument capable of killing at one

blow. The horses, too, evoked much admiration. The beautifully-groomed horses of the Cossacks and Circassians called perhaps for less attention than the plucky little Siberian ponies, whose strength and impudence seemed boundless. One can well understand why members of this breed were taken on the Polar expeditions of Scott and Shackleton.

Then, of course, there were the innumerable trains of artillery, ammunition carts, commissariat carts, ambulance carts, fodder for the horses, meat vans—all the requisites of a modern war. And, lastly, small batches of gloomy prisoners, of whom a few were invariably slightly wounded, being marched to the Citadel. Or, sometimes, a solitary captured officer doing his best to smile, and guarded by three or four also smiling Cossacks.

Outside the city, in its immediate neighbourhood, were large bodies of men hard at work restoring the recently dismantled fortifications (and people freely talked of the treachery of Germans in high places in Poland not so long ago, in this connection), putting up fearsome barbed wire defences and burrowing day and night.

Description of the events of these two weeks is difficult. One received a vast mass of impressions of events which seemed to have no



connection with one another. Soldiers, aeroplanes, gun-firing, fugitives, and a thousand other things forced themselves upon one's notice in no determinable sequence. Rumours came in hordes. Only after I had left Warsaw was it possible for me to sort out my notes and impressions, to disentangle rumours and to regain a sense of perspective. The continuous gun-firing had a curiously distracting effect. It used to last all day and all night, until sudden pauses came to cause a stronger reaction than the rolling sounds to which we had become accustomed. One's sleep was sometimes punctuated by falling bombs, and by the unexpected approach of the cannonade, for although the Russians on every day of this fortnight forced the Germans back at one point or another, on every day the Germans approached a little nearer. Generally speaking, the Russians were successful on the south-east of the town, the Germans to the south. Here, beyond the suburb of Mokotow, Siberian troops and field artillery could be seen entrenched within two miles of the city. Out here, too, one saw the piteous sight of the villagers working day and night to save what they could of their cabbages, onions, and other vegetables which were just reaching that stage when they could be sold. Great losses had been undergone as the inevitable consequence of guns



and horses moved across cultivated fields. Here and there great beds of vegetables had been trampled upon. One was sorry for the poor old women who were thus suddenly threatened with the loss of what probably meant a great deal to them. The refugees from the ruined villages in many cases wore the obsolescent national dress. The men wore orange striped knickers, and generally a sheepskin jacket; the women a kerchief of any colour, so long as it was sufficiently brilliant, a more sober shawl, and skirts of the same striking hues as their husband's knickers. In Poland, Volhynia, and Little Russia generally, it may be added, orange is really the prevailing colour of the native dresses. These refugees came from all the invaded parts of Poland, save a few women from Kalisch whose faces bore the marks of the rough treatment they had received from the enemy. Fugitives finally came to call for extraordinarily little comment. It became an accepted thing that a few ramshackle carts loaded up with nondescript bundles, very old and very young people, and followed by a few pale and self-controlled men and women, should pass in procession down the main streets at short intervals.

A little later another sort of cart became equally frequent. At first the wounded were generally taken to houses in the outskirts of the town, so

that the inhabitants were not confronted with the actual evidence of Russian losses. But these hospitals soon proved inadequate to the demands made upon them, and the wounded were taken into the town. It was remarkable how soon people accustomed themselves to the sight of cart-loads of severely wounded men, who had only received first aid, and who often enough had not ceased to bleed.

The officers in the town had all along talked freely of the probability of an evacuation. General Rusky favoured this plan, and was apparently only over-ridden because the Commander-in-Chief feared the bad moral effect upon all the fronts of the Allies of the almost simultaneous capitulation of Antwerp and Warsaw. The bridges across the Vistula were mined, and long, black rolls of gun-cotton or some such substance were tied up amongst the girders. Hence distrust and fear among the population, who naturally found cause for alarm in the inconsistency between the mined bridges and the reassuring proclamations.

Then there was the behaviour of some of the officers. One cannot suggest that the Russian Army suffers from cowardice (although one officer did tell me *à propos* of London and its Tube railways: "I've been in them lots of times, but nothing would induce me to go under the Thames in them.") I said that a good many Londoners

performed this perilous journey in safety, but he replied: "Well, the English are a very cold-blooded people. I'm not a coward, mind you, I've been on the switchback at Earl's Court . . ." And he went on to describe the horrors of it.) But if British officers behaved as a good many of their Russian colleagues did in Warsaw, there would be considerable trouble.

Disreputable supper-parties and much drunkenness—all in the utmost publicity—were nightly events. There is a story to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, the Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaevitch, made an unexpected appearance and, infuriated by what he saw, degraded a number of officers to the ranks. That is as it may be, but it is certainly true that something sudden and violent did happen, for the hotels of the first-class ceased to sell intoxicating liquors, and the number of officers in their public rooms visibly diminished. After which the "Furnished Rooms" and smaller hotels of the town began to do a great business.

The sudden retreat of the Germans from Warsaw calls for an explanation which, apparently, the Russian military experts were not allowed to give. Yet the situation was perfectly simple. It may be presumed that the authorities during a period of some weeks were making strenuous efforts to slur over the fact that the



Germans had penetrated farther than the outskirts of Poland. The brutalities of Czenstohowa and Kalisch were described in detail by the Press, but the refugees from Radom and Petrokov had to tell their own tales. All this was perfectly in a piece with the behaviour of those in authority in Warsaw, who did not allow the local papers to publish a word about the enemy outside the gates, to refer to the more than audible cannonade, or to print a syllable on the situation, which was not communicated from official sources in Petrograd. The policy of silence as regards operations in the neighbourhood of Przemyśl was comprehensible and perhaps justifiable; German and Austrian success in that direction in October would have involved Russia almost certainly in the evacuation of Galicia. But in Warsaw a million people had to sit and listen to the guns for fourteen days on end, and it is not improbable that some of them wondered what it was all about. The situation about October 6 was as follows. In Galicia the Russians west of Lemberg were facing the Carpathians, having just captured Przemyśl, and driven the Austrians back towards the mountains. Farther west and to the north-west, the Russians facing south and south-west were struggling for Cracow. Across the rivers San and Vislok, however, their numbers were relatively few, and their position relatively precarious. The Germans held



the left bank of the Vistula. Through Kalisch and Czenstohowa (the latter united by a rapidly constructed military railway directly with Breslau), the Germans had been pouring their troops for two months past into Poland. From Cracow other streams had flowed north-east, towards Radom and along the bank of the river. Several engagements occurred at Sandomir, just above which place the river is made more difficult to cross by the waters of the tributary San. About October 6th the Germans had actually succeeded in getting a considerable body of men across, when they were attacked by Cossacks and by Russian artillery, and driven back or entirely destroyed. For three or four days later an artillery duel took place. In the end the Germans gave up the attempt, for the time being, having lost heavily in men, and a few guns, to the Russians. The issue of this fight was of considerable importance, for had the Germans been able to get across the Vistula at this point, Lemberg would soon have been cut off. Diverted at this point, the German advance crawled up the left bank of the Vistula towards Warsaw. At the same time, the other German armies in Poland continued their advance in the same direction. Lodz was enveloped. The situation here in a sense bordered on the ludicrous, for the town contained so many Germans (many of whom are said to have sent their more valuable

worldly goods into Germany for safety) among its wealthier inhabitants, and so much unemployment prevailed that the invaders do not seem to have considered it worth while to add to the confusion more than was strictly necessary. The Town Council, apparently under the misapprehension that Poland had already been annexed, adopted a limited German terminology as a beginning, and somebody in command sent out almost daily telegrams to Warsaw to say that the Germans were not in the city. The enemy avoided doing any harm to Lodz, but passed on, towards the Vistula. At Kutno the Russians were waiting, and the invaders after a severe series of struggles decided that in view of the difficulty of reaching the Vistula in this region, let alone of crossing it, an immediate advance on Warsaw was the only feasible programme. It therefore came to pass that the German armies arrived almost simultaneously within striking distance of the south and east of the capital of Poland. Then the interesting fortnight began.

It has already been stated that Warsaw was being carefully kept in ignorance of what was happening between itself and the frontier. Rumours, however, soon began to get about. Fugitives began to arrive from ruined villages, and spread alarming reports of the proximity of the apparently overwhelming forces of the enemy.

Although every effort was made by a committee appointed by the Governor to deal promptly with these arrivals, by packing them off temporarily to Seidlce, nevertheless they left their tales behind them. The Military Governor of the district of Warsaw published a reassuring statement as to the safety of the town, and to the effect that whereas certain " feeble-minded " and " evilly-disposed " persons were publishing alarming stories, any person caught in the act of spreading a panic would be severely dealt with. This was shortly followed by another proclamation to say that the town was perfectly safe, and that it would be defended to the utmost from the danger threatening it. Finally came the short announcement, in one compact sentence, that anybody found tampering with telegraph or telephone wires would be shot forthwith, without trial. By this time the guns were booming.

On Saturday, October 10th, the Germans coming from the west, struck the first blow,, and forced a Russian retreat,, after severe losses and the capture of two generals. Immediately afterwards extraordinary rumours of treachery and defeat began to fly about Warsaw. They were persistent, yet incredible.

The same day as that on which this fight took place, the guns began their chorus, and Warsaw indulged in such a panic as it permitted itself.



All the wealthier inhabitants left. The municipal administration cleared out, two days before the monthly pay day of its staff, the lower grades of which remained, disconsolately gathering day after day on the steps of the Telegraph Office. The banks also removed themselves. The Post Office (which in Warsaw is separate from the Telegraph Office) became extremely inefficient, delivering letters when it listed, and collecting them even less frequently. Once it remained entirely closed for three days on end. The supply of postage stamps ran out—a circumstance which did not matter greatly, as by this time the town was so short of small change that those who had stamps were only too glad to find somebody to use them as currency. A few of the shops closed down, but, considering all things, the number of these was wonderfully small. Large numbers of men and women of all trades found themselves out of work, and stood about regretting that no alcoholic drinks were to be had. Business men talked vaguely of extending the six-months' moratorium to a year, or the end of the war, whichever was the longer. The Poles began to betray a keener interest in the soldiers, and no longer affected an aristocratic *hauteur*. Instead, they bought packets of cheap cigarettes from peripatetic tobacconists and gave them to the troops marching out of the town. These latter,



always apathetic, began to pour hour after hour, day after day, along the main streets leading out of the town. They walked rather than marched, with no attempt to keep step, preferring the sidewalks to the road, mixing freely with the foot-passengers, and taking a mild degree of interest in the ineffective German aeroplane which, sooner or later, would drop a bomb in their direction and miss them. They seemed calm and indifferent, these men. They differed in many respects from British troops—their bearing was not what we should call soldierly, they walked anyhow, their kits hung clumsily around their waists as well as upon their shoulders, they carried curious straw sleeping-sheets, and other peculiar articles. But the physique of these men, and the determination upon their faces, was unmistakable. The Russian soldier can stand fatigue and pain in an extraordinary manner. A nurse told me how she had to assist at eight slight amputations—generally of fingers—which took place hastily and in the same room, without anæsthetics. Not one of the patients uttered a cry of pain. They had all been brought into a hospital at four o'clock in the morning, straight from a fight; they had been operated on and cleaned up, and twelve hours after their arrival they were all moved on to another dépôt, to make way for fresh wounded.

Three or four times a day a German aeroplane would pay us a visit, and throw a few bombs. The aviator or aviators in question always seemed to make an effort to achieve a useful result, but never succeeded. As they were forced to remain at least six thousand feet above the city, to be out of range, inaccuracy of aim is not to be wondered at. Bombs were twice thrown at the Telegraph Office. In both cases they alighted in the nearest public garden, the Saski Ogrod, where one wounded a gendarme, and the other quietly buried itself. Efforts were also made to drop bombs upon troops marching out of the city, but the killed and injured were invariably women and children. I was told that during one day aeroplanes accounted for fifty-six casualties in Warsaw, but this is probably an exaggeration. The average score per bomb seems to have been about one, and an aeroplane seldom threw more than four on a single visit. As in Paris, the inhabitants showed no fear of the possible consequences, but rushed to obtain a good view whenever one of these machines showed itself. If the crash of a descended bomb was heard in the immediate neighbourhood, a rush to see what the damage was at once took place, although the ubiquitous ambulances would remove human casualties in a wonderfully short time. It was seldom that a crowd could gratify itself with

anything more harrowing than a shapeless mass of flesh and blood which had once been part of a horse, still attached to a damaged cart—a distressing enough sight, in all conscience. Inside the town, discipline was maintained when one of these things came along. Outside, however, the appearance of an aeroplane was the signal for the instant discharge of every available gun and rifle in its direction. None of the soldiers seemed to have any idea that their bullets and shells must necessarily return to earth with considerable force, nor did they seem able to distinguish between a Russian and a German aeroplane, although the former bore red and blue circles, and the latter, black crosses under their planes. As may be imagined, the chances of hitting an aeroplane on the wing are extremely slight. The only one brought down by the soldiers was a Russian; fortunately the aviator was uninjured.

The explanation given above of the German advance will enable readers also to understand the retreat. For a fortnight the heaviest fighting was concentrated upon the German left flank out to the east of Warsaw. Here the enemy once came up to within ten miles of the city, but generally speaking, the Germans were between fifteen and twenty miles away. The Russians aimed at driving them back to the south and



south-east. One little church changed hands six times, so uncertain was the outcome of the duel during its first ten days. Then at last the Russian troops, continually reinforced, proved to be too strong. The German left wing began to roll back. Had the Germans to the south of Warsaw, at Willanow, held their ground, their army would have been forced into a wedge-shaped mass, with the thin end at Willanow, and the Vistula on the right, with the Russians and their guns gathering upon the opposite bank. To retreat was the only way to get out of the difficulty. Along the almost impassable roads and wet fields an orderly movement was impossible; heavy carts and guns were freely left behind. After Sunday afternoon, October 18th, the cannonade was heard no more. The Germans were retiring in confusion, hoist by their own petard, beaten by their own favourite device of outflanking. To add to the confusion, a huge Russian army, said to number a million, and concentrated between Lublin and Ivangorod, crossed the Vistula at four points. By this time it appears that the Germans were outnumbered by about three to one.





TOWARDS A BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING.



## CHAPTER XV.

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### HOW THEY STOPPED THE DRINK.

NOWHERE on earth has the drink problem extended to such extraordinary dimensions as in Russia. The consumption of vodka, which contains 40 per cent. of alcohol, has grown considerably during the last few years. The sale of spirits, moreover, is a Government monopoly, from which the State receives an ever-increasing sum annually, a sum which was expected to approach the neighbourhood of £100,000,000 during the present financial year. There has always been a section of public opinion strongly opposed to this means of raising revenue, but until the beginning of August, 1914, this agitation was regarded as hopelessly idealistic. An ex-peasant from Samara, named Chelishov, who had been elected to the Third Duma, carried on, almost single-handed, a Parliamentary campaign against the monopoly, drawing eloquent pictures of the miseries caused by drunkenness in the villages of Russia. But nobody listened to him.

Suddenly war was declared, and on August 8th, the Duma, at the same sitting as that at which



representatives of every party proclaimed their unity in the face of the common danger, passed a resolution for raising the price of vodka about seven shillings a gallon. A day or two afterwards, however, it was decided to deal far more drastically with the question. The sale of vodka was entirely stopped. All the beershops were shut. Only at first-class restaurants could intoxicants of any sort be obtained. This, carried out by administrative order, was at first regarded as an emergency action to allow mobilization to be carried out without hindrance. Only a month or two later the results were already so surprising that, quite apart from the sobriety of men called to the front, all parties united in demanding that the prohibition should not be withdrawn.

I had a talk with the nearest Russian equivalent to Mr Lloyd George—one of the leaders of the Constitutional Democrats ('' Cadets '') in the Duma, Mr A. I. Shingarev. He enjoys a great reputation in Russia, both as a fine orator, and as a financial expert, and lately he has been doing his utmost to draw public attention to the brilliant results of the Government's daring experiment. The period of all but total abstinence is as yet too short to yield any satisfactory statistics, but it is already obvious that when the time comes for statistical evidence to be forthcoming, its weight

will be overwhelming. Mr. Shingarev told me a few of the changes which have already taken place.

The social effects of Russia's "going dry," as the Americans say, are visible in all directions. Factory owners and hands alike are congratulating themselves on the elimination of the Petrograd working-man's week-end debauch. The quality of work has been improved. Employees no longer have headaches to keep them at home on the Mondays and Tuesdays. As piece-work is general, families are finding that their receipts are virtually doubling. Managers notice that their workmen no longer have to pay fines for coming late. At one armament works, employing 6,000 hands, the manager has reported that he finds that five days' work is now being done in three. Already a distinct improvement in the quality of the clothing worn by the people can be noticed. Doctors at municipal hospitals report that the number of street accidents with which they have to deal has been almost exactly halved. The quantity of crime has dropped amazingly. One court of August 1913 had to deal with 346 male and 97 female offenders. This August the figures were only 89 men and 31 women. From the villages comes the same story over again. A peasant told Mr. Shingarev: "It's a little dull, but, you know, we're just like real people now."

It appears that the Government is preparing at some time to remove the prohibition so far as it applies to beer, which will, however, be sold at a higher price. The vine-growers in the Crimea and Bessarabia will have to be dealt with; probably the national wines will not be allowed to disappear, but will have to pay a higher excise. But vodka is the real enemy, and vodka, it is believed, will become absolutely a thing of the past. The financial problem is the most serious. How is the Government to get that £100,000,000 back? The difficulty will not be insuperable, for the increased productivity and wages will greatly add to the sources the State will be able to tap, while the greater purchasing power of the people will itself, in this country of indirect taxes, automatically send fresh streams of revenue towards the Treasury.

The complete results of this vast experiment will not be visible for some generations; only when the dysgenic influence of alcohol has died out will we be able to estimate the full value of the prohibition. As things are at present, it is difficult to believe that Russia will ever allow vodka to return to its unholy sovereignty.

The first official statistics to be forthcoming as to the efficacy of the removal of vodka from its place in Russian life, related only to the month of August 1914, and therefore merely indicate a



tendency rather than illustrate a complete result. These figures were published about the end of October. They refer to the number of criminal cases investigated by the provincial courts of north-west Russia.

| Province.     |     | August, 1913. | August, 1914. |
|---------------|-----|---------------|---------------|
| Petrograd ... | ... | 1,196         | 915           |
| Vitebsk ...   | ... | 564           | 438           |
| Livonia ...   | ... | 521           | 484           |
| Courland ...  | ... | 231           | 163           |
| Esthonia ...  | ... | 260           | 169           |
| Pskov ...     | ... | 367           | 239           |
| Novgorod ...  | ... | 416           | 231           |
| Olonets ...   | ... | 96            | 49            |

In those provinces which contain a large urban population—such as Petrograd and Livonia (in which Riga is situated)—the diminution is not striking. This was explained in the semi-official *Novoye Vremya* by the fact that in the larger centres of population the more complicated species of crime are possible, and that these, such as forgery, embezzlement, coining, and fraud, are not generally committed under alcoholic influence. It is also pointed out that the decrease in crime in a province varies directly with the proportion of its inhabitants which are of pure Russian blood. In Pskov, Novgorod and Olonets, where the proportion is highest, the fall is also most emphatic.



One of the curious features of the suppression of vodka, after a few months of its absence, was the unanimous expression of satisfaction from all quarters. At first the habitual drinker took the absence of his beverage hardly. Now all Russia is wildly teetotal. Elderly men with faces (and especially noses) which reveal one secret of their past, now stand in long queues outside the shops of *ci-devant* wine-merchants, waiting their turn, until they too can enter and buy a bottle of unfermented grape-juice. Voices from the villages reach Petrograd. Wife-beating apparently is no longer a necessary institution in the patriarchal household. Educated people living among the peasants report various changes, according to the degree of their enthusiasm for temperance. Some assert that the Russian peasant is developing an extraordinary poetic faculty in the absence of alcohol, that he appreciates beauty of sound and colour as never before. Others, that he is becoming an unparalleled liar, on account of the necessity of having something to talk about, as he can no longer remain comatose and mute for long periods. He reads considerably more than he used to, and his clergy find that he pays far more attention to his religious obligations than was formerly the case. The chorus of praise seems unending.

Another result of the prohibition of vodka is



A RUSSIAN PEASANT GIRL.





shown by the Government Savings Bank statistics. In July\* the total deposits fell off by over three million pounds. But in August they actually rose about seven hundred thousand pounds, a figure which becomes all the more impressive when reference is made to the amounts on deposit in previous years. In the Augusts of 1913 and 1911 there was a fall of between £60,000 and £70,000, while in 1912, when a rise took place, it only amounted to £60,000. It is clear, therefore, that the increase is no seasonal fluctuation, but clear savings. On September 1/14, 1914, the total sum deposited was £167,720,000.

It must not be supposed, however, that the entire population regards the suppression of its vodka with anything like equanimity. Many days had not passed since the publication of the prohibitory edict when the hospitals found that they were being called upon to deal with a new class of cases—the men and women who had attempted to make methylated spirits the substitute for their usual beverage, and had been more or less poisoned by it. The number of these cases was soon reduced. The drinkers of methylated spirits were disappointed in their belief that their sufferings would come to an end with the operation of a stomach-pump, and that thereafter they would be at liberty to continue their

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\* Remember that the Russian calendar is 13 days behind.



experiments. The hospitals soon tired of removing the same cause of offence from the same individuals, and conceived the idea of handing all such cases over to the police, to be kept in prison for three months under "administrative order," that is, without even the formality of a trial. As soon as this course of action came to be taken, the number of methylated-spirit drinkers fell considerably.

By the end of the first month the new *régime*, the experiment of enforced temperance, could already be regarded as brilliantly successful. Not merely the prisons, but the poorhouses found they were called upon to make fewer admissions, in spite of the greater quantity of unemployment. In August 1914 only 89 men and 31 women received the institutional treatment supplied to the able-bodied paupers of Petrograd; in August 1913 the corresponding figures were 346 men and 97 women. Sociologists will be interested, however, to note an unexpected phenomenon; a distinct increase took place in the number of juvenile offenders. The causes of this were not far to seek. The greater number of these child delinquents came of families in which habits of irresponsibility had already been formed by the presence of confirmed alcoholics. Such control over these children as there existed, was in the hands of their fathers or elder brothers, now in

many cases removed from their homes and sent to the front. Voluntary committees, etc., had not the authority to deal with these troublesome children who, moreover, often enough left their homes promptly after their chief disciplinarians had gone, and as promptly fell into bad company. The result was a rise of twenty-five per cent. in the number of child offenders.

I have been asked several times whether Russians, finding one form of vice withheld from them, did not take to another. As far as I can tell, nothing of the sort has been happening, certainly not on a large scale. There have been allegations of an increase in the gambling habit, but this would be no new thing, and on the other hand, I have heard complaints from people who regret that card-parties are less frequent now that money is scarcer. There are plentiful stories of attempts at evasion; it is said that people make all sorts of efforts to get quantities of methylated spirits, and that they are learning how to dilute and otherwise treat it to produce the required degree of happiness. A certain amount of evasion is inevitable. But on the whole, the results of the prohibition have been such as to convert the whole Press, and to justify the strange paradox that war has given Russia many of the untried blessings of peace.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### A NOTE ON NATIONALITIES.

THE war has already brought into prominence in Russia a formidable array of problems of nationality. These concern almost exactly one-half of the inhabitants of European Russia, but the standard books read in England scarcely mention them. When an author, writing a book about a country, whether it be his own or foreign, finds himself compelled to describe a dozen or so nationalities, each with its own incomprehensible language, he naturally is apt to content himself with a few safe generalizations, and hesitates to plunge beneath the surface. Hence our ignorance of a most important feature in the political make-up of Russia. To give an illustration. There is a thing called the Ukrainian Movement, which concerns about twenty-eight millions of Russians, and is consequently a matter of some importance in the politics of their country. Yet, before the outbreak of war, English literature on the subject consisted apparently of three



pamphlets and a few *ex parte* letters in *The Times*! It is not realized that half of Russia is not really Russian.

This half extends geographically from the White Sea to the Black Sea, along the Baltic coast and the German, Austrian, and Rumanian frontiers. The northern extremity of this band is occupied by Finland, which need not be considered by us, as it is the best-known to English readers of the non-Russian parts of Russia, and also because it has been up to the present well outside the war area. This last fact does not apply to the nationalities now to be enumerated.

To begin at the Gulf of Finland. On the southern shores are settled a few small colonies of Swedes, left behind by the one-time masters of the land. There are also the Esthonians (principal town Reval), numbering about a million, Lutherans by religion, and allied to the Finns by blood and language. As we go south along the coast we meet Letts (about 1,350,000, with a few hundred thousand extra individuals of closely allied stock). Here the predominant religion is still the Lutheran, but the race is different, the language is entirely different, and there is a strong political movement for independence—not from Russia, but from Germans. For the principal landowner in this part of the world is the German, who has been systematically buying up estates



and importing his fellow countrymen to colonize, to supervise, and generally to crowd out the native element as much as possible. Now the native element naturally does not approve of this economic programme, which appears to take his own ultimate extinction for granted. The Lett is a simple individual, who fails to understand why local administration should be in the hands of gentry who will not allow him to speak either his own language or the language of his native land, but insist upon his employment of German, which is a dirty language, anyway. The Revolution of 1905 began in the Baltic provinces by the Letts rising up against their masters. Practically every rebellion of a peasantry that has ever taken place has demonstrated the fact that when the tiller of the soil gets thoroughly annoyed, he can give points on pillage and massacre to Attila himself. The Letts in 1905 would have delivered Russia from a very large amount of the German nuisance once and for all, had not they been checked and subdued by the Russian Army.

There are about 2,000,000 Germans, their chief point of concentration is Riga.

About 4,500,000 White Russians live on this western fringe, in the provinces of Grodno, Mohilev, and their neighbours. These are Slavs—none of the preceding peoples are—and speak a corrupt variety of Russian. Politically they

matter very little, as they are the least cultured of the Slav races; they are mostly agriculturists, in a very poor way, and have been aptly described as the "poor relations" of the great Russians.

The White Russians partly overlap with the Lithuanians, although the real centre of this people is more to the west. The Suvalki province returns Lithuanian deputies to the Duma. Vilna is the most important town. The total number of Lithuanians and their cognates is somewhat under 2,000,000. They are generally Roman Catholics, and, in the days when Lithuania was an independent kingdom, used to enter into frequent alliances with Poland, becoming more or less firmly riveted in 1569. But nowadays, after three and a-half centuries of dependence, the Lithuanians are again beginning to dream of running as a separate kingdom in which their own peculiar language (said to be nearer Sanskrit than any other European tongue) shall oust all the others now spoken in its frontiers. This is a tall order, as appears from a glance at the diversity of the inhabitants of the town of Vilna. Here are White Russians, Lithuanians, Poles and Jews gathered together, with a sprinkling of Russians, and no one race in an absolute majority. There will be gay times in the old town of Vilna when one of its constituent elements gets Home Rule, and proceeds to deal with the others.

Concerning the Poles and the Jews, numbering respectively 9,000,000 and 5,000,000 within the pale, many books have been written, but nobody in favour of Polish autonomy has yet put forward a practical proposal for saving the Jews from government by the Poles.

The Ukrainians are sometimes spoken of as the Little Russians or the Ruthenians. They speak their own variety of Russian, and live in hopes of being united with their brethren in Galicia into an independent state, stretching from the Carpathians to the north-east corner of the Black Sea. As this ideal makes the Ruthenian look on Russia as his natural enemy, it has been fostered, so far as practicable, by the Austrian Government.

Lastly come about a million Rumanians in Bessarabia and Kherson, some of whom would like to be reunited to Rumania.

It will be seen, therefore, that Western Russia is populated by several overlapping races differing in creed, language, and aspirations. All these nationalities have been governed from outside and from above. They have had no voice in the management of their own affairs—except in the case of the Germans—and the results have been painfully similar. Racial distinctions have been accentuated instead of obliterated. Instead of being a “melting pot” of nationalities, Russia has kept them in cold storage.



## CHAPTER XVII.

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### A NOTE ON THE BUREAUCRACY.

IN the chapter on Petrograd it was pointed out that the crowd in the streets of that city differed from an English crowd on account of the extraordinary quantity and diversity of the uniforms worn by the men. Now consider the fact of these uniforms in its psychological aspect. A man gets into a uniform at an early age, say twelve, and if he should later develop into a civil servant or come to serve the Crown in any capacity, he will continue to wear uniform to the day of his death—for not even in retirement will he be allowed to divest himself of it entirely. That means that from the moment a boy puts on his first uniform, he is made to feel himself a part of a huge and clumsy machine, especially in Petrograd, where there are probably more Government employees to the square yard than in any other city in the world.

For the queer thing about the Government of the Russian Empire is its heavy centralization in Petrograd. It appears that if a post office in the wilds of Siberia, or a school building in Samara,



have to be repaired, the necessary expenditure must be sanctioned by a hierarch in Petrograd, who can only be approached by tortuous official channels. These last are generally underpaid, and their circulation may have to be stimulated by methods indicated in the chapter "A Friendly Russian," before anything can be done. In other words, the Russian Empire is being run on the same lines as the Roman Empire, except that the latter did not take so much upon itself, as, in its day, of course, railways and telegraphs did not exist, and a number of other services were left to private enterprise. The outcome of the Russian system is a huge bureaucracy, which has gradually become a vast vested interest, and as such, the natural enemy of all institutions which appear likely to limit its powers in any way. Bumble always hates the mere unofficial public, but the Russian Bumble, uniformed, carefully subordinated on the model of Prussia, his morals kept in order (more or less) by the Orthodox Church, his education prescribed by the Government universities, and his opinions dictated to him by authority, must almost inevitably come to regard the un-uniformed world as mere raw material, a *clientèle*, a herd to be driven, a mob to be controlled rather than served. That is why a foreigner, or a Russian with foreign blood, who has escaped some at least of the training (and the

ensuing stupefaction) prescribed for the normal aspirant to Government service, very often manages to rise to the head of affairs. The late Count Witte, for example, was of Dutch origin, and began life as a railway clerk.

Outside Petrograd the only persons holding wide administrative powers are the provincial governors, who, however, often enough are the mere spokesmen of the Ministry of the Interior. Prince Urussov, appointed Governor of Bessarabia in 1903, having studied the Code, found in it a confirmation of his view that he was entitled to practical independence of the Ministry, which held the purse-strings. In his *Memoirs of a Russian Governor* he tells this revealing little tale: "Long had I been sceptical about the information of the Government bureaus of St. Petersburg, and about the value of the measures for local administration ordered by the central bureaus. I remember in this connection a story about a governor, Prince Shcherbatov, who, after governing a province for three years, gained the reputation of a splendid administrative officer. When ill-health compelled him to resign, his successor found in the governor's office all his ministerial packets, each bearing the inscription 'SECRET: TO BE HANDED TO THE GOVERNOR,' and each unopened. This story came from V. K. Plehve."

This illustrates the difficulty. Either the central executive may be controlling too much, or it may not be controlling at all. The first great internal reform to take place in Russia will not be marked by demonstrations and all the noisy paraphernalia of a popular movement. A strong man will be appointed, a genius at organization, and bit by bit he will weld together the scattered strength of the Russian administration. He will destroy with free and strong hands, and he will make himself thoroughly disliked, especially by the inefficient and the senile. But the end of it will be government by a real government, and not by ossified force of habit.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### SONGS FROM SIBERIA.

IN that terrible record of ten years in Siberia called in English, *Memorials of a Dead House* or *The House of the Dead*, or, by another translator, *Buried Alive*, Dostoevsky describes some Christmas festivities got up by his fellow-convicts at which prison songs were one of the principal features. It has always been a matter of extreme difficulty to collect these songs; convicts in the natural order of things would only know those sung in their own prisons; officials and visitors would scarcely have an opportunity of hearing them at all. Moreover, it is not in the prisons themselves that many of the most interesting songs are sung. The Russian police authorities, in their desire to provide Siberia with colonists, have a system of indeterminate sentences; convicts are released from confinement after a certain number



of years, and converted into farm labourers as far as is practicable. These convicts while in prison often manage to escape early in spring, and after several months of the open road return to their captivity. This qualified freedom is, after all, a better thing than labour in mines or, indeed, forced labour of any sort. There is, therefore, a large number of tramps during the summer who pick up their living as best they may, and who often become, in fact, ballad singers, working their way from village to village.

In 1908 a Mr. V. N. Hartevelt obtained various official permits and travelled all over Siberia in quest of songs. Palm oil and personal charm succeeded. After he had examined his haul and weeded out local variants of Russian popular songs and poems, there remained fifty-seven the authenticity of which was beyond doubt. He also noted down their musical accompaniments, and discovered that in almost every case the composer had merely adapted Church tunes. Another curious thing he noticed was the dearth of songs among the *bonâ-fide* villagers. Escaped convicts were the only muses that many of the villages knew.

The songs fall into two distinct categories. The convicts sing about the things that are far from them: their native villages, the great towns of Russia, and their love affairs. The tramps, on

the other hand, sing of their own surroundings; they are the Nature poets. Sometimes, as in the third example given below, they make up legends, but they will always place them in their own locality. The collection includes only a few really sentimental songs, and these, it is curious to note, are said to be specially favoured by murderers and their like. Political prisoners bring their own songs with them, and as they are generally sentenced for a term of years they do not go on tramp like the indeterminates who have no more liberty to lose. Apparently convicts tend to become more imaginative the farther east they go. Some of the most poetic songs come from Nerchinsk, near the Manchurian frontier—where there are lead mines, and where, since the lead sooner or later is bound to affect the lungs of those who work underground, generations succeed each other rapidly. After the Polish rising of 1863-4 had been put down, a large number of Poles were sent to this place, and they left their mark in many of the songs which are sung to-day. Farther east, too, the influence of Church music grows less; the tramps adapt the tunes of the native Yakuts and Buryats.

These songs are primitive poetry, created by men who have not come to fear self-consciousness. The Siberian singer sings about himself to please himself. He has no rigid rules. Many of the

poetic devices employed can be found in *Piers Plowman*. Assonances frequently take the place of rhymes, and repetitions are very common. The Russian of the peasant class has a habit of adding diminutive endings to words in a manner calculated to baffle the translator. Even a preposition may wear a suffix of endearment.

The first of the following songs was heard at the prison at Alexandrovsk. Like most of the prison songs, its scansion is almost correct. The original rhythms and the original crudity have been preserved in the translations.

I'm coming home from Irkutsk,  
Perhaps a happy man,  
Perhaps I'll earn a living—  
We'll live as best we can.

The gates of this our prison  
For us will opened be,  
And from our heavy labours  
We all shall be set free.

Just one little year more  
In prison I must stay,  
And then, my little flower,  
Your lover comes straightway.

With hair so long and bushy,  
No bracelets on my feet,  
I'm coming home to you all  
Dressed in new clothes so neat.

The following is from the prison at Yakutsk :

THE HANGMAN.

Sleep, my poor one, sleep, my dear,  
Soon to fetch you they'll be here. . . .  
Soon the little night will go,  
Soon the little sun will show. . . .

At early morn a crow will scream  
And the hangman cease to dream;  
He will come into your cell,  
You'll go outside guarded well.

In the forest stands a tree,  
Down from it a rope hangs free. . . .  
On a branch screams loud that crow,  
Upward mounts the hangman slow.

He's already touched his pay,  
Strong the rope; there's no delay. . . .  
The old tree quivers in its fear,  
Distant thunders you can hear.

Get up, poor one, get up, dear,  
Soon to fetch you they'll be here. . . .  
Hark, the crow screams out once more,  
Hangman's knocking at the door.

As might be expected, the songs of the tramps vary far more than those of the convicts. The wanderers have seen more of the world, and the quality of their reception from the villagers doubtless depends upon the entertainment they have to offer. The first of the following tramp songs is a



full-fledged ballad; we may imagine its singer, bearded and unkempt, dressed in some long and tattered shirt, with his legs tied up in rags, bellowing forth the short lines, which, it will be noted, are merely in the nature of commentary.

In the Urals stands a mountain, called "the Giant,"  
near to Zlatoust.

He has stood for ages past, and on his head there  
always lies a mist.

The winter comes, spring passes by,  
And some are born, and some must die,  
But the mountain stands for aye!

In the Urals stands a mountain, called "the Giant,"  
near to Zlatoust.

In that mountain is a mighty, old and wicked  
wizard's den.

And he keeps a look-out day and night for fear of  
us poor men.

Gallant hunter, have a care,  
If you follow goats, beware,  
Run, and don't look round, up there!

In that mountain is a mighty, old and wicked  
wizard's den.

Long ago once did the wizard in his anger loudly cry,  
And the earth shook. And he threw up fire and stones  
towards the sky.

He's slept quite soundly since that day,  
But from him all men run away,  
If he awakes, the devil to pay!

In that mountain is a mighty, old and wicked  
wizard's den,

The next is said to be sung in chorus. It employs assonances throughout. Convicts, imprisoned or escaped, are generally known as "the unfortunate ones" in Siberia. Nobody would be so unchristian as to suggest that they were wicked.

Oh, tender-hearted little fathers,  
Oh, tender-hearted little mothers,  
Help us unfortunate little men,  
A deal of sorrows we have seen!

In the name of Christ, oh people dear,  
Bring all you can!—and here,  
Help us wanderers, kind friends,  
Help us vagabonds.

You will get a crown of gold  
In the next world;  
And we'll think of you in this one,  
Dear people, when we're back in prison.

Lastly comes a lament.

I buried at the dawning  
A friend of mine to-day,  
And near by where the roads cross  
I laid him, where the earth was grey.

There was no sound of funeral bells a-ringing,  
There was no sound of funeral hymns a-singing;  
But Mother Grey-Earth took him for all time  
Without a priest, without tall candles burning.

And over where his grave was  
A little birch I set,  
And wished my fellow wanderer,  
A happy resting place would get.

His death I should have feasted, but tell me this,  
I say,  
If I had had the priest there, how was I to pay?  
But I did vow, the next drop I should own  
I'd drink in honour of the last to step before  
God's Throne.

And all around was silence deep,  
None of his folk were there to weep!  
None of his folk to weep for him. . . .

Some of the songs which produced the deepest impression upon Mr. Hartevelt cannot be translated with justice to themselves. There is, for example, a little four-line chorus called the *Chain March*. This is sung by convicts who are being moved by stages from one prison to another, and its musical accompaniment is two-fold—humming through combs and clanking chains to time. The words, slangy as they are, are the least difficult detail to render. If one can imagine the long line of convicts, moving slowly and with difficulty, their state of mind and body, and, on all sides of them, the endless Siberian plain—the scene is described in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*—the words scarcely matter. What are we to think of these songs and their authors? We must, in the

first place, admit the former to be true folk-songs, the outpourings of individual poets revised and re-moulded during the process of repetition until the personality of the inventor has become inextricably buried under that of the whole body of the singers. This continuous attrition and addition tends to produce a marked homogeneity, exactly like that of Scottish, or any other ballad-poetry.

In these songs is the expression of a race, for the Russian knows that the convict is not different—he is only unfortunate. When we make comparisons between the character revealed by these songs and any other, we should allow for the fact that they are the product of an almost illiterate body of men. The Siberian is not in the same category as the inmate of Portland, who somehow or other manages to find out who won the Boat Race the day after the event. He is culturally on a level with the last Irish gleeman, Michael Moran, who died in 1846, and was lamented many years later by Mr. W. B. Yeats. But he sings only of the things which are near to him. He will never cultivate that warm-brown-earth and the joyous-wind-on-the-heath style which is not so much a style as a stunt. He knows the earth is seldom properly warm and that the wind is generally a nuisance. He is entirely sincere in his art, given a little to philosophising, and very sure



of his God. He dislikes the authority over him, but somehow resentment fails to penetrate into his soul. He believes that to be a thief is no greater misfortune than to be an official. He would say, as Michael James Flaherty used to say, "It's the will of God." He is, in fact, thoroughly representative of the still barbarous Russian.

## CHAPTER XIX.

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“ TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN.”

THESE are the busy days of the whole race of translators. The punning Italian proverb, which was once their badge of shame, has now succumbed to overwork, and is seen no more. Their work is no longer relegated to booksellers' uppermost shelves, but stands firmly side by side with such mainstays of the book trade as *The Wall of Partition* and *The Service Kipling*.

The works of Russian authors are leaping into special prominence by reason of this change of favour. The book reviewer, if not the reader, talks lightly now of Andreyev, Gorky, Garshin, Artsibashev, Chekhov, and even of Sologub, Kuprin, Korolenko and Remizov, unknown until the other day. Publishers whisper darkly of large new reputations shortly to be sprung upon an unwitting public. There are two reasons to explain this boom. The first is basely materialist: international copyright does not apply to Russia,

therefore it is unnecessary either to obtain permission to translate or to pay the Russian author a royalty. Therefore, publishers support our education in Russian literature and scoff at, let us say, the protected writers of Italy and Spain, unless they be of the first water. The other reason may be disputed by some, particularly, I should imagine, by Russians. It is that there is a distinct affinity between English and Russian literature, closer than that between English and French, and perhaps as close as that between English and American. Why this should be the case I cannot pretend to explain. The reason lies probably in the realm of psychology. But the affinity is an undoubted fact. Two illustrations may be given of the way it works.

About thirty years ago a Mme. Alchevsky summed up in a remarkable book the results of an investigation carried out at a Sunday school in Kharkov. The students at this school were adults and children, and had the use of a library of 2,500 works, which they could either read by themselves or hear read to them. For several years the teachers took down the individual comments of the students upon the books read, leaving the final analysis to Mme. Alchevsky. The most popular foreign authors were then found to be Dickens, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, and Shakespeare, in the order named.

The other illustration comes from a different department. There is no more essentially national type of literature than the literature of humour. So truly national is it that it is generally regarded as untranslatable. The Scotsman cannot (or says he cannot) understand an Englishman's joke. But the humorists read by the Russians are nearly all English—Dickens, Jerome K. Jerome, Wilde, and W. W. Jacobs, to name a random few. And when a Russian journalist aspires to humour he generally gives himself a mock-English *nom de plume*, such as "Taffy" or "Sir Pitch-Brandy."

The reciprocation of this friendly feeling, it may be pointed out, is definitely directed towards Russian literature, and not, in a general sort of way, towards the numerous Slav literatures. The name of the national poet of Bohemia, Vrchlicky, falls upon unresponsive ears in England. Poland has a Strindberg, but no publisher has attempted to make his name (which is Przybyszewski) a household word among us.

Now the more or less complete recognition of the affinity and the complete understanding of the laws of copyright, have together induced English publishers during the last sixty years to issue innumerable translations from the Russian. There has been, of course, a great quantity of duplicating and, on the other hand, many fine works remain inaccessible. But zealous hunts in



second-hand bookshops (or, what is much simpler, in the British Museum Catalogue) will bring to light an extraordinary quantity of unsuspected Russian classics, already in the English language. A publisher who was so inclined could probably produce a library of Russian authors, containing several dozens of names, without paying a single translator's fee, but simply by acquiring the copyrights of out-of-print translations. Such a Library would almost entirely have to consist of novels, although a volume or two of poems could be gathered from the *Proceedings* of the Anglo-Russian Literary Society. The whole mass of translations from the Russian, both in and out of print, indeed include every author of renown, with but a few exceptions.

I am not certain of the date of the first English translation of a Russian novel. A writer in the *Athenæum* of April 25th, 1846, said that "Of Russian literature the merest glimmering, a few faint rays, have as yet reached this country," but did not specify the lamps that shed them. Yet in 1846 Lermontov had been dead five years, and Gogol's work was almost at an end. The Crimean War aroused an interest in Russian affairs, and in 1854 two translations burst upon the public. They were Turgenev's *A Sportsman's Sketches* (the first of at least five versions) and Gogol's *Dead Souls*. It is interesting to note that

*Dead Souls* has been this year reintroduced to English readers by Mr. Stephen Graham, and received all the honours of a new book. In point of fact we do not yet possess an English translation of the work as it left Gogol's pen and the fireplace into which he twice threw the manuscript of the second part. What we have is quite a different matter. No catalogue of 1854 will mention *Dead Souls*. But Messrs. Hurst and Blackett's list will include *Home Life in Russia*, by "a Russian Noble." It seems that a bold, bad baron translated *Dead Souls* into English, gave it a sudden ending, trimmed it up with interpolations glorifying England and holding Russia in contempt, and sold the MSS. to the unsuspecting publishers. When taxed with the facts, the Baron stuck to his guns, and the matter was allowed to drop. But he succeeded in queering the pitch for another translation for over thirty years. The next version of *Dead Souls* was also adulterated. After Gogol's death, his secretary, Zaharchenko, attempted to rewrite the second part from its remaining fragments, and probably did his work with the least serious injustice to the original possible in the circumstances. A French translator, Charrière, thinking that the new text did not read with sufficient smoothness, interpolated some passages, and otherwise faked freely. When E. A. Vizetelly, in the 'eighties, began to publish

his Russian Novelists Series, his anonymous translator merely rendered the Zaharchenko-Charrière text into English. This is the version we have recently been called upon to admire.

It is but natural that English publishers should have refrained from introducing to the reading public the works of writers of secondary importance of the period so enormously dominated by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Turgenev. During the years immediately preceding and following the Emancipation, Russians were reading with considerable enjoyment the works of a goodly group of satirists. These were chronically at war with the censorship, and flagellated with the utmost impartiality both the Russian Government and its subjects. Few of the works of these authors have come through to English readers, although there are several French translations. There is at present only one of Goncharov's novels in English—his first book, *A Common Story*—which was the first of Mrs. Constance Garnett's translations. There is a rumour abroad to the effect that Goncharov's masterpiece, *Oblomov*, is soon to see the light here. Pisemsky and Lyeskov are entirely untranslated. Shchedrin (1826-1889) has had better luck, with one novel in English (*Tchinovnicks*, 1861) and at least three in French. This is really a remarkably good record, considering the fact that the author, merrily playing



at dodge-the-censor, makes a plentiful use of hidden allusions, and puts other obstacles in the translator's path.

Turgenev, we have seen, soon reached the English public; only six years, in fact, after the publication of his first work of importance. Tolstoy was first represented in 1862 by a translation of *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*, the first of at least six versions. Dostoevsky has been more or less accessible since 1881; several of his novels, which have not been since reissued in English, were published during the 'eighties by Vizetelly. (The same publisher, it should be noted, brought out a selection of Gogol's short stories, *Taras Bulba*, etc., which should be bought at sight whenever possible, as it includes many of the author's best things.) The fact that the three great novelists were before the public for so many years before they came to be a regular part of the pious book-reader's pabulum is perhaps the greatest testimonial to the translations of Mrs. Garnett, which now inexpugnably hold the field. To deal faithfully with a consistent stylist such as Turgenev is relatively easy, but to translate the glowing passages of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and the dry waste places of *Anna Karenina* with equal justice is a great achievement. It is roughly possible to divide English translations since 1881 of Russian novels into three eras. The first was



the Vizetelly era, when the British public had a large quantity of second-rate versions of great works dumped upon it. The second was the Constance Garnett era, characterized by fine renderings of the works of the three great novelists. The third, which has now begun, is the catch-as-catch-can era, marked by innumerable translators and reckless publishers.

Let us glance at some of the moderns and their works. The best-known "novel" by Veresayev, a terrible autobiography entitled *The Memoirs of a Physician*, was published in English about ten years ago by Mr. Grant Richards. Its reception, we believe, was far from cordial. But a generation that has taken Strindberg to its bosom would probably enjoy it. The name of Korolenko has been spasmodically appearing in recent articles on Russian literature. Two little books of short stories by him, however, were published by Mr. Fisher Unwin as long ago as 1891 and 1892. As these were in the Pseudonym Library, and as Mr. Fisher Unwin had the quaint idea of printing the author's name in Russian letters, it is possible that some of our readers have read Korolenko without knowing it. About the same time his two best long stories, *The Blind Musician* and *In Two Moods*, were published by Ward and Downey, the translation being by Stepniak, in collaboration with an Englishman

There yet remain some hundreds of short sketches by Chekhov, numerous daringly depressing studies by Andreyev, and several short stories by Gorky. Kuprin is an author who has almost escaped notice here. The defunct house of Sisley brought out his fine novel *In Honour's Name* in 1907, and Messrs. Everett followed with *Olessia* two years later. Innumerable short stories by him remain; they deal generally in a detached spirit with military life. Kuprin enjoys making his soldier-heroes balance discipline against conscience. Comparison between Kuprin and the short-lived Garshin is almost inevitable; the chief difference is the insane strain of many of the latter's stories, of which Messrs. Duckworth have published the majority. We have now made the acquaintance of Sologub in an English dress; there are still about fifteen volumes of novels and stories by him. Remizov and Briusov are two more untranslated authors, whose love of the grotesque, extending to both manner and matter, makes them difficult.

Many, perhaps most, of the preceding novelists are also dramatists or poets. I have been writing of them, however, with special reference to their chances in the English market. The present state of the copyright law makes the publication of a novel by Sologub, for example, an extremely risky matter, as there is always a chance that

some other publisher will bring out a cheaper version at the same time. The number of persons who read plays by virtually unknown authors is still unremunerative, from a commercial standpoint. *The Times* Russian Supplement of June 28, 1915, hinted at a forthcoming copyright convention, but similar rumours have been in the air for many years. Publishers are almost inevitably driven to give their preference to volumes of short stories, as the probability that two translators will make an approximately similar selection is so small as to act as a safeguard against wholesale duplication. It should surely be possible for publishers to co-ordinate their translating activities so as not to step so often on one another's toes. If only every publisher on commissioning a translator, or every translator seeking a publisher, advertised the fact in a trade organ, something would be done.

Agreement is badly needed on other points. The transliteration of Russian names is still left to the discretion of translators, each of whom is a law unto himself. I have three books of Chekhov's short stories in English. Upon their covers the author's name is spelt in three different ways (although two volumes come from the same publisher), and none of them spells it as I do. The Liverpool School of Russian Studies has endorsed one scheme of transliteration, which had



already been adopted by Mrs. Garnett, the Royal Geographical Society has put its name to a slightly different scheme, and the British Museum Catalogue to a third. Perhaps the Liverpool scheme best deserves adoption.

This rough survey of what we have had from Russia and what we are likely to have is necessarily incomplete, but should make clear that, with few exceptions, the great dead authors have reached us, and the foremost living ones are on their way. But whether they are arriving in good condition is another matter. The catch-as-catch-can era is on us, and many of the new translators have not yet learned to regard their own calling with the respect it deserves. The Tenth Muse, who is the patroness of translators, is younger than her sisters and more coy, and her face may not be found between the pages of a dictionary.



## CHAPTER XX.

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### A SUGGESTION ON LOVING RUSSIA.

It is interesting and, in a painful sort of way, distinctly amusing to compare and to contrast the books, articles, and opinions on Russian affairs of to-day, with those written and expressed ten years ago. In those days our journalists and authors regarded Russia as engaged in a death-struggle with a vicious autocracy. To-day, the aforesaid autocracy, unchanged in all its essentials, is exuberantly hailed as on the side of the angels, a staunch defender of democratic principles, and the like. Now anybody is at liberty to believe anything he pleases as to the political conditions prevailing in Russia, but it is nevertheless curious that many who shouted themselves hoarse with indignation in 1905, should be yelling their admiration in 1915. For the Russian Government is the same. The Prime Minister of the present moment is V. L. Goremykin, who also filled the post when the first Duma held its first session.

The extreme and one-sided view of events in Russia which flourished here ten years ago is now

being balanced by an equally extreme appeal in the opposite direction. The limit is reached by a successful author, who is also a journalist and a lecturer, and who knows the Russian peasantry very well. Not long ago an article by him was chastely placarded over all England in the two words,

LOVE  
RUSSIA.

In these words were summed up the moral of a hundred other articles and as many personal appeals to British audiences.

The invitation to Love Russia raises three questions: Can we? Should we? Would they like it? I venture to believe that the answers to these questions are all in the negative.

In Russia certain conditions prevail, which happen to be precisely those against which Englishmen have been fighting, with occasional success, and against which they are fighting to-day. Freedom of the Press, of speech and of belief; the recognition of the rights of smaller nationalities (has not Mr. Asquith stated this to be one of the principles on account of which this country has joined in the fray?), the right to speak, read and write any language, even if it is one's own—all these things are granted here, accepted by every political party as the necessary

postulates to a national existence. But in Russia they have yet to be recognised as essential to the welfare of the State and its subjects. Love demands a certain equality, but the civilizations of Russia and of England are as dissimilar as an ape and a man—I am not arguing that one is finer than the other, but urging their emphatic difference. And the size of this difference is the answer to the first question.

There can be no dispute that Russia is at present performing a service of extreme utility to Britain. She is bearing blows that would otherwise fall upon the western front. A neutral Russia would mean German access to immense stores of food, and a vast saving of men. But our service to Russia is no less than Russia's service to us. Germany's insidious plot against Russia, and her virtual assumption of the dominant power in that country, are too well known to need repetition. Russia's danger was no less than Britain's. And I may fairly say that Russians recognize this to be the case, as has been indicated in Chapter VI. But no Russian in his senses would dream of calling upon his fellow-countrymen to

#### LOVE ENGLAND.

Lastly, it is pretty clear that the Russians do not want to be loved—at least, not quite like that.

Not very long ago a body of persons with simply admirable intentions founded the Russia Society. But the attention paid by the Russian Press to the event showed a most curious disinclination to be loved. The promoters of the Society had not entirely succeeded in realizing the feelings of a great many Russians when they held their inaugural meeting, and put up several distinguished gentlemen to make speeches. When Members of Parliament who had never been to Russia, and who would not have known what to do with themselves if chance had sent them there, unctuously proclaimed the 'superiority of Russian to German culture, and when on the same occasion the London representative of a Petrograd paper, with most emphatic views, rose to speak for the Russian people, the rest of the Press lost its patience a little. Partly because of the healthy journalistic feeling that a pressman, however able, on the staff of one paper, however widely read, cannot voice the opinions of 171,000,000 persons, but in greater part, because several Russians detected that they were not being loved, but merely patronized. A leading article in the Petrograd *Rech* protested almost bitterly against the indignity of Russia being patted on the back—and by such persons! The suggestion that Russian culture was better than German especially annoyed it, because it indicated that the



speaker held the theory that the two were comparable, which is absurd.

So there we are. England and France owe an immense debt to one another, but neither that nor the memory of ten years of *Entente Cordiale* would lead any responsible person in his senses to suggest that we ought to love France. Britain, France and Russia, in working together for their safety, have entered into a business deal, not into a mutual admiration society. Just as the English and the French reserve the liberty to criticise one another, so, if the Anglo-Russian alliance is to be a healthy thing, and free from hypocrisy, the partners must also allow themselves to express whatever they may deem necessary to say about one another. The candid friend is a nuisance, no doubt, but the friend who acquiesces in silence is a danger, for one cannot tell when his friendship is coming to an end. Britain and Russia have much to gain by mutual criticism. But this must be accompanied by mutual understanding. English politicians and journalists should get to know more about Russia. They must be in possession of the important facts, or they will be liable to be stampeded by any body of Russians which cares to organize English public opinion. The individual Russian and the individual Englishman of the same class, when left together, almost invariably find they can hit it off extremely well. But if the

Love Russia microbe is allowed to do as it pleases, before long the average Englishman and Russian who happen to meet will be trying to regard themselves and each other as superman and saint, and then the hitting will be of an entirely different character, and another set of international problems will be calling aloud for a solution.

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